



**56A FOREST WAY, WARFIELD PARK
BAT SURVEY REPORT**

Prepared for Warfield Homes Ltd.

by

Hankinson Duckett Associates

HDA ref: 554.2

February 2024

CONTENTS

	Page
1 Introduction	1
2 Methodology	2
3 Results	5
4 Summary and impact assessment	6
5 Recommendations	6
6 Conclusion	8
7 References	8

HDA Document Control and Quality Assurance Record

APPENDICES

- A Bat Roost Survey Summary Plan
- B Site photographs

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site location and summary description

1.1.1 This report describes an updated suite of bat roost surveys at 56A Forest Way, Warfield Park, Bracknell, hereinafter referred to as 'the site'. The site centre is located by National Grid Reference SU 89105 70470. The study was commissioned by Warfield Homes Ltd. in June 2023.

1.1.2 The site comprises a disused prefabricated dwelling and associated hardstanding and gravel, together with patches of colonising scrub, grassland and ephemeral vegetation. The site is located within the interior of Warfield Park, to the north-east of Bracknell in Berkshire. It is bordered by existing park home properties immediately to the east and west; by an area of mature trees and scrub to the north; and by The Elms access road to the south. The remainder of Warfield Park, consisting of a development of residential park homes set within small enclosed gardens, dominates the landscape of the wider area on all sides. A full description of the habitats present within the site is provided in the *Ecological Appraisal* (HDA, 2021). The location and boundary of the site are shown in *Appendix A*.

1.2 Legislative context

1.2.1 All UK bat species are protected as 'European Protected Species' (EPS) under the 2017 Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (as amended). In relation to an EPS, the 2017 Regulations make it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of an EPS;
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species, in particular any disturbance which is likely to: (i) impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or to hibernate or migrate; (ii) affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal; and/or
- To (a) be in possession of, or to control; (b) to transport any live or dead animal or any part of an animal; (c) to sell or exchange or (d) offer for sale or exchange any live or dead animal or part of an animal of an EPS.

1.2.2 In addition, all UK bat species are protected under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended). All species are listed on Schedule 5 of the Act and are subject to the provisions of Sections 9.4b and 9.4c, which make it an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; and/or
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a bat.

1.2.3 If works are planned that are likely to constitute an offence under the current legislation, then works should be carried out under an appropriate Natural England licence.

1.2.4 Seven species of bat (Barbastelle, Bechstein's, Noctule, Soprano Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared, Greater Horseshoe and Lesser Horseshoe) are also identified as Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the 2006 NERC Act. Section 40 of the Act requires planning authorities to regard these species as a material consideration in the planning process.

1.3 Development proposals

1.3.1 Proposals for the site comprise the removal of the existing dwelling and provision of a replacement dwelling together with associated infrastructure and garden.

1.4 Scope and purpose of the report

1.4.1 A suite of bat roost surveys were originally carried out on the site in 2021 by HDA, during which no bat roosts were recorded. In recognition of the time that has passed since the 2021 bat surveys were carried out, the proposed development of the site, its potential to be used by bats, and within the context of the legislation set out in *Section 1.2*, a suite of updated bat surveys were subsequently undertaken to determine current usage of the site by roosting bats, and to determine the need for any licensing or mitigation in relation to bats. This is the subject of this report. Specifically, the aims of the study were:

- i. To identify potential bat roosts in structures and trees within the site, where potentially affected by the proposed redevelopment;
- ii. To determine the requirement, if any, for licensing in respect of bats; and
- iii. To provide outline recommendations for any mitigation and/or enhancement required to ensure that the development avoids adverse impacts on bats, and, where possible, provides enhancements to support the long-term favourable conservation status of bats in accordance with nature conservation legislation, planning policy and the 2006 NERC Act.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The methodology followed in relation to all bat survey work undertaken at the site is consistent with current legislation and good practice guidelines set out by the Bat Conservation Trust at the time of the surveys (BCT, 2016). The following sections detail the suite of surveys undertaken to inform the proposed redevelopment works, and the results of these surveys are provided in *Section 3*.

2.2 Phase 1 bat scoping survey

2.2.1 A Phase 1 bat scoping survey of the site was carried out by Fiona Muir of HDA on 6th July 2023. During the survey, the buildings and trees within the site were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats and classified according to its potential against published guidelines at the time of the survey (BCT, 2016).

Phase 1 building survey

- 2.2.2 All buildings within the site were inspected externally from ground level using binoculars and a powerful torch to identify and investigate any potential entry and exit points such as missing roof tiles, loose fascias and lifted lead flashing, and to look for evidence of entry/exit in the form of staining, discolouration and/or scratch marks.
- 2.2.3 Internally, the buildings were searched exhaustively where possible to look for evidence of current or former occupation by bats. In addition, a powerful torch was used to investigate any accessible cavities, crevices and recesses in the buildings.
- 2.2.4 In view of the findings of the internal/external inspection, the potential of the buildings to support roosting bats ('confirmed roost', 'high', 'moderate', 'low' or 'negligible') was assessed in accordance with current best practice guidelines at the time of the survey (BCT, 2016). Assessment of bat roosting potential requires consideration of a number of criteria, including the design and construction of the building or structure, the size and location of potential features and access points, the position of the building or structure, aspect, geographical location, surrounding land use and adjacent landscape linkages.

Phase 1 tree survey

- 2.2.5 All trees within and adjacent to the site were inspected from ground level with the aid of binoculars and a powerful torch to identify potential features suitable for use by roosting bats. Potential features include splits, cracks and cavities, peeling bark, woodpecker holes, broken branches and a covering of ivy where this is of sufficient age to provide a suitable microclimate between the tree and ivy stem(s).
- 2.2.6 In accordance with current best practice guidelines at the time of the survey (BCT, 2016), trees were placed into one of the following five categories based on the nature, size, location and quality of features present in each tree and surrounding habitat:
- Negligible suitability – Trees with no or negligible features for roosting bats;
 - Low suitability – Trees of sufficient size and age to contain potential roost features but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential;
 - Moderate suitability – Trees with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats but are unlikely to support roost types of high conservation status;
 - High suitability – Trees with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time; or
 - Known or confirmed bat roost.

2.2.7 The results of the Phase 1 bat scoping survey determined the need for further surveys in relation to bats.

2.3 Phase 2 bat roost survey

2.3.1 Phase 2 roost surveys comprising dusk emergence surveys were conducted wherever buildings had been identified as having the potential to support roosting bats, and where current proposals suggest these will be lost to the proposed redevelopment works. Phase 2 bat roost surveys were conducted to determine the presence/probable absence of roosting bats and, where present, identify species and numbers. The level of survey effort conducted was determined with reference to the identified bat roosting potential of the building in accordance with best practice guidelines at the time of the survey (BCT, 2016).

2.3.2 Surveyors with electronic bat detectors¹ were positioned around each feature to record bats emerging from or entering the buildings. For the more complex/dark locations, surveyors were supplemented by infrared camcorders² coupled with infrared lights to illuminate the possible roost features. Potential emergences were analysed in real-time by an ecologist the following day. Surveyors and camcorders were positioned to provide adequate coverage of all potential emergence/re-entry points on each feature surveyed. The surveyors carrying out the surveys were all experienced at carrying out bat emergence surveys. Dusk emergence surveys generally began 15 minutes before sunset, ending approximately 1.5 hours after sunset. Records were made of any emergences and re-entries, and incidental records were also made of bat commuting and foraging activity in the vicinity of each surveyor.

2.3.3 Details of the date and timing of the Phase 2 bat roost surveys are provided in *Table 1* below.

Table 1: Timing and conditions of Phase 2 bat roost surveys

Building surveyed	Date / Time	Sunset	Conditions
B1	Dusk 06-07-2023 21.05- 22.50	21.20	10% cloud cover, calm, dry, 20°C
	Dusk 25-07-2023 20.46 – 22.31	21.01	60% cloud cover, Beaufort Scale = 20-17°C

2.3.4 No trees with the potential to support roosting bats were recorded within the site. No Phase 2 roost surveys of trees were therefore undertaken.

¹ Anabat Walkabout and Anabat Express with 'Analook' recording software.

² Canon XA40 4K camcorders with infrared capability.

2.4 Limitations

2.4.1 All surveys followed best practice guidelines at the time of the surveys (BCT, 2016) and were conducted at an appropriate time of year, under favourable weather conditions and with an appropriate level of survey effort both in terms of the number of surveyors used and number of survey visits undertaken. The surveys are therefore considered sufficient to allow a robust assessment of the likely effects of the proposed redevelopment on bats.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Phase 1 bat scoping survey

3.1.1 All buildings within the site were inspected during the Phase 1 bat scoping survey. The results of the Phase 1 building survey are summarised in *Table 2* below and the location of the buildings are shown in *Appendix A*. Photograph references (in brackets) relate to the supporting photographs provided in *Appendix B*.

Table 2: Results of Phase 1 building survey

Building	Description	Findings	Bat roost potential
B1 (Photos 1 to 5)	Disused prefabricated park home on brick footings. The park home is constructed of wood panels with rendered sections and a pitched tiled roof.	External: Bat access opportunities into the building include multiple gaps under roof and ridge tiles, and a large hole in the south-eastern corner of the pitched roof which provides a potential access route into an internal roof void. Internal: No loft hatches were present in the building interior however it is believed that a loft void of at least 30cm high is present. No evidence of roosting bats was recorded.	Moderate

3.2 Phase 2 bat roost survey

3.2.1 In view of the findings of the Phase 1 bat scoping survey and the redevelopment proposals for the site, in accordance with current best practice guidelines at the time of the survey (BCT, 2016), B1 was subject to two Phase 2 emergence surveys using an appropriate number of surveyors to ensure comprehensive coverage. Details of the results of the Phase 2 bat roost surveys are provided in *Table 3* below.

Table 3: Results of Phase 2 bat roost surveys

Building	Date / Type	Results	Updated roost status
B1	Dusk 06-07-2023	No emergences/re-entries	Moderate
	Dusk 25-07-2023	No emergences/re-entries	

3.3 Bat activity

3.3.1 Incidental records of bat foraging and commuting activity around the surveyed building were made during the Phase 2 bat roost surveys. Occasional passes by Common

Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle and Noctule were recorded within the site during the survey. Activity comprised brief passes and occasional foraging by individual bats.

4 SUMMARY AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.1 No bats were recorded emerging from the surveyed building (B1) during the Phase 2 bat roost surveys, and no evidence of bats using B1 was recorded during the Phase 1 bat scoping survey. It is therefore considered unlikely that B1 supported a bat roost at the time of survey.

4.2 In view of the survey findings, it is considered highly unlikely that the proposed development would have an adverse effect on roosting bats or the favourable conservation status of the local bat population.

4.3 Notwithstanding the above, due to the opportunities for roosting bats remaining within B1, and the highly mobile nature of bats, often using roosts on a seasonal or transitory basis, it is conceivable that this building could be colonised by bats in the future and a precautionary approach to demolition/stripping works is therefore recommended in *Section 5*.

4.4 Overall, the level of bat foraging and commuting activity recorded in the vicinity of the surveyed building during the Phase 2 bat roost surveys was considered to be low. Notwithstanding this, in addition to implementing precautionary measures to avoid any effects of the development on roosting bats during construction, development proposals should also seek to maintain and enhance opportunities for roosting, foraging and commuting bats within the site following development in accordance with planning policy and the 2006 NERC Act. Measures by which this can be achieved are further identified in *Section 5* below.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 This section identifies measures to be implemented during the proposed redevelopment of the site in order to avoid and mitigate potential effects of the works on bats and to maintain the favourable conservation status of the local bat population. In addition, measures for long-term maintenance and enhancement of opportunities at the site for roosting, foraging and commuting bats are included in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023) and the 2006 NERC Act.

5.2 Roosting bats

5.2.1 Current knowledge suggests that there are no bat roosts associated with B1, and therefore a licence will not be required for the proposed demolition of this building. Due to the opportunities for roosting bats that remain within B1 and the highly mobile nature of bats, it

is recommended, however, that a cautious approach is taken to demolition/stripping of B1, either through a further survey to confirm the continued absence of roosting bats or through a sensitive approach to works as set out below.

Further survey

- 5.2.2 Bats may occupy roost sites on a seasonal or temporary basis, and old roost sites may be abandoned and new roosts occupied within relatively short periods of time. In view of this, it is recommended that a single emergence survey of B1 is carried out immediately in advance of works to the building commencing. This would ensure that up-to-date information is available to confirm the continued absence of roosting bats and avoid the need for supervised works assuming no bats are encountered (see below).

Approach to works

- 5.2.3 Unless a future survey is carried out to confirm the continued absence of roosting bats as detailed above, all demolition/stripping works involving the removal of features with the potential to conceal roosting bats should be overseen by a licensed bat worker under an Ecological Watching Brief. Potential features at the site may include: lifted tiles on north-eastern elevation and a large hole in the corner of the pitched roof on the south-eastern elevation. Suitable features should be inspected prior to works progressing and a cautious approach to removal should be employed, with features removed by hand, where appropriate.

- 5.2.4 In the event that a bat is discovered during the further survey or demolition/stripping works at the site, works to the building must cease, and an appropriate Natural England derogation licence should be applied for and approved before works can continue.

Replacement of lost roosting opportunities

- 5.2.5 It is recommended that a minimum of one bat roosting feature (such as a Greenwoods Ecohabitats Single Crevice Bat Box or Two Crevice Bat Box, or similar) is mounted on a south to west-facing location on the building and/or mature tree immediately adjacent to the site in order to offset any loss of potential roosting habitat and offer new long-term provision for roosting bats at the site in accordance with the 2023 NPPF and the 2006 NERC Act. Ideally, the bat box should be provided prior to the commencement of demolition/stripping works of the building with bat roosting potential in order to maintain current roosting opportunities at the site throughout the construction phase.

5.3 Protection and enhancement of roosting, foraging and commuting opportunities

- 5.3.1 Notwithstanding the current low interest of the site for foraging and commuting bats, wherever possible, development proposals should seek to maintain and enhance the value of the site for foraging and commuting bats in accordance with the 2023 NPPF and the

2006 NERC Act. This could be achieved through the retention of adjacent mature trees where appropriate and through the provision of new planting and the avoidance of significant light spill from adjacent development. In order to maximise the value of landscape planting for the local bat population, consideration should be given to the use of nectar and pollen-rich plant species in order to encourage invertebrate prey for foraging bats.

- 5.3.2 Additional bat boxes to that described in *Section 5.2* could also be provided on the building and/or retained trees in order to further enhance opportunities for roosting bats at the site. Bat boxes should be positioned on south to west-facing elevations of buildings or trees and avoid areas affected by (existing or proposed) artificial light spill.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The findings of the Phase 1 bat scoping survey and the Phase 2 bat roost survey indicate that there are no active bat roosts within B1 proposed for demolition. It should be noted, however that roosting bats can move roosts frequently and it is therefore recommended that the precautionary measures identified in *Section 5* above are implemented during redevelopment to avoid any unexpected impacts on bats and/or contravention of legislation relating to this group.

- 6.2 Notwithstanding the absence of roosting bats at the site, development proposals for the site should seek to maintain and, where possible, enhance opportunities for roosting, foraging and commuting bats in accordance with planning policy and guidance and Section 40 of the NERC Act. Measures by which this can be achieved are given in *Section 5* of this report.

7 REFERENCES

Altringham, J. (2003) *The New Naturalist: British Bats*. Harper Collins Publishers, London.

Bat Conservation Trust (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 3rd Edition*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

CIEEM (2018) *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater and Coastal*, 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Department for Communities & Local Government, (2023) *National Planning Policy Framework: Legislation and policy, Good practice and guidance*. Sited on https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf

HDA (2021) *56A Forest Way, Warfield Park: Ecological Appraisal*. Hankinson Duckett Associates, Wallingford.

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. and McLeish, A. P. (eds) (2004) *Bat Workers' Manual (3rd Edition)*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

HDA Document Control and Quality Assurance Record

Project Title: Warfield Park Ecology: 56A Forest Way
Project Reference: 554.2
Document Title: Bat Survey Report
Commissioning Party: Warfield Homes Ltd.

Issue	Description	Date of Issue	Signed
1	Bat Survey Report	February 2024	

	Personnel	Position
Author	Fiona Muir	Ecologist
Approved for issue	Clare Bird MCIEEM	Associate Ecologist

© Hankinson Duckett Associates. All rights reserved

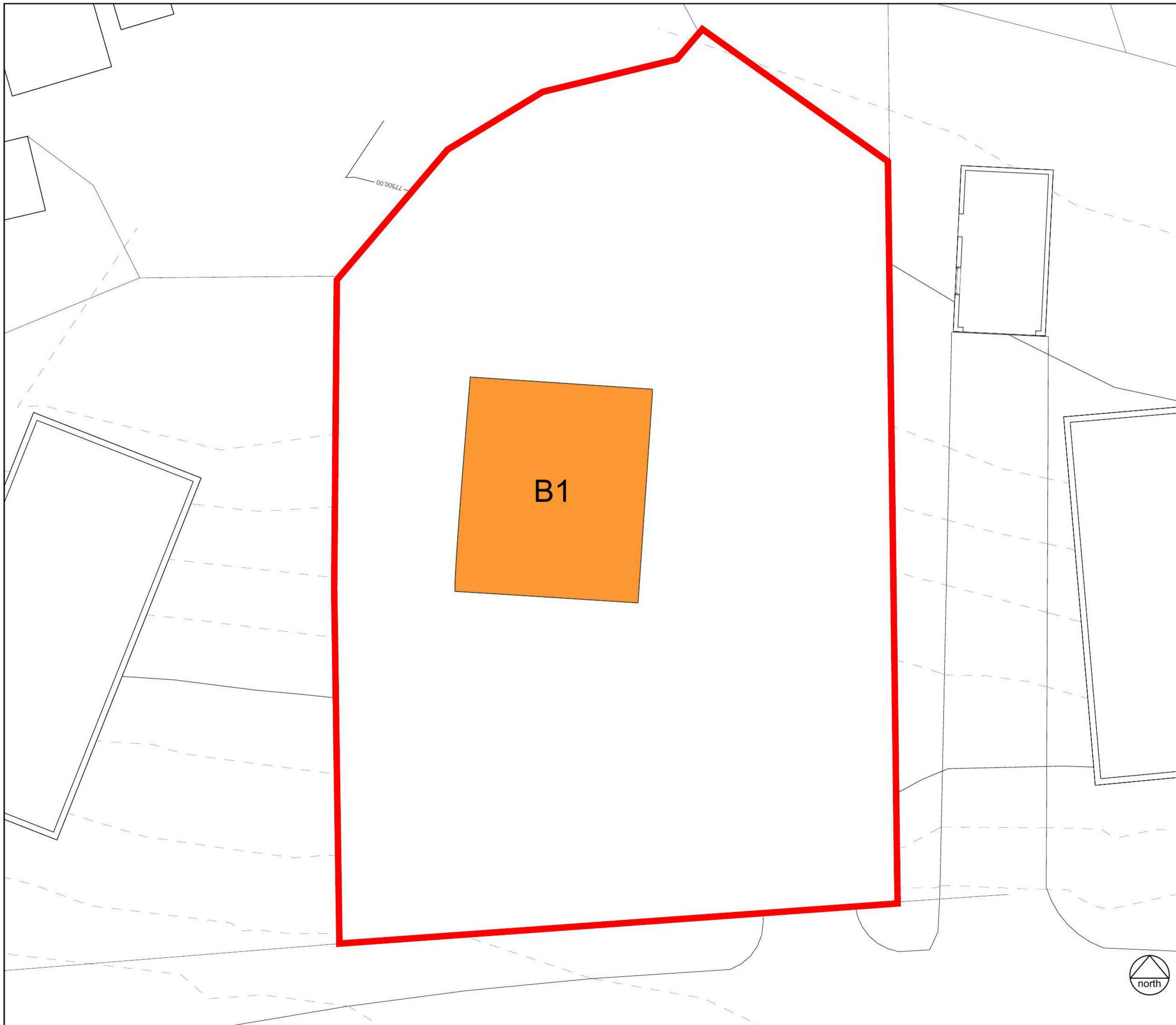
No part of this report may be copied or reproduced by any means without prior written permission from Hankinson Duckett Associates. If you have received this report in error, please destroy all copies in your possession or control and notify Hankinson Duckett Associates.

This report has been prepared for the exclusive use of the commissioning party and unless otherwise agreed in writing by Hankinson Duckett Associates no other party may use, make use of or rely on the contents of the report. No liability is accepted by Hankinson Duckett Associates for any use of this report, other than for the purposes for which it was originally prepared and provided.



Opinions and information provided in the report are on the basis of Hankinson Duckett Associates using due skill, care and diligence in the preparation of the same and no explicit warranty is provided as to their accuracy. It should be noted and it is expressly stated that no independent verification of any of the documents or information supplied to Hankinson Duckett Associates has been made.

APPENDIX A

Bat roost survey summary plan



KEY

-  Site boundary
-  Building with moderate bat roost potential

*Roosting categories relate to roost potential in accordance with the BCT 2016 guidelines. All trees within the site are regarded as having 'Negligible' potential to support roosting bats.

CLIENT:
Warfield Park Homes

PROJECT:
56A Forest Way

TITLE:
Bat Roost Survey Summary Plan

SCALE AT A3: **NTS** DATE:
February 2024

554.2/65

Based on Ordnance Survey mapping with permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office Licence no. AR187372

© hankinson duckettt associates

The Stables, Howbery Park, Benson Lane, Wallingford, OX10 8BA
 †01491 838175 e consult@hda-enviro.co.uk w www.hda-enviro.co.uk

**Landscape Architecture
 Masterplanning
 Ecology** 

APPENDIX B

Site photographs



Photo 1 : Southern elevation of B1



Photo 2: Western elevation of B1



Photo 3: North-western elevation of B1



Photo 4: South-western elevation of B1



Photo 5: Close up of potential bat access point on the south-eastern corner of the pitched roof.