URBAN GREEN

FAO Sean McBride

Castle Green Homes

Bridgemere House,

Chester Road, Preston Brook,

Cheshire,

WA7 3BD

Date 18th November 2024

Project Ref UG2763

Dear Sean,

Re: Tan y Bont, Rhosrobin – Ground Level Tree Assessment

Introduction

Urban Green has been instructed to undertake a Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) on behalf of Castle Green Homes at their development site of Tan y Bont, Rhosrobin.

Purpose of visit

The site visit was undertaken to update previous survey results and in response to comments from Natural Resources Wales.

Ecology Background

A ground level tree assessment was undertaken as part of the PEA completed by Cheshire Ecological Services in 2021. Ten individual trees (TR01 – TR10) were assessed as providing various levels of bat roosting potential (five assessed as low and five assessed moderate) in line with guidance at the time of survey (Collins, 2016). It was recommended that detailed bat surveys were undertaken should the proposals for the scheme impact any of the identified trees.

Natural Resources Wales provided comments on the planning application for the site on the 30th September 2024 requesting further survey work be undertaken on the trees previously identified as supporting roosting potential for bats.

Methodology

The GLTA Inspection was completed by Jake Healy, Ecologist at Urban Green on the 12th November 2024.

The GLTA was conducted using binoculars and a strong torch allowing any features to be identified, based on the best practice guidance (Bat Conservation Trust, 2023).

During a GLTA, the suitability of trees and PRFs can be categorised according to the categories outlined in Table 1.

Ground Floor, The Tower
Deva City Office Park, Trinity Way
Manchester, M3 7BF

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Table 1. Suitability of Trees for Roosting Bats

Category of Suitability	Definition
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
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

Results

The site was an active construction site at the time of survey, with the southwestern extent of the site comprising an active residential estate. Construction activities were underway within the centre of the site.

Of the ten trees previously assessed as providing bat potential, only two remained present (TR05 and TR06); the other eight trees had been felled in order to facilitate the development.

Tree TR05 comprised an oak, located at the centre of the site at the western end of a copse. This area was fenced off in order to protect the retained habitat from the construction works. No suitable PRFs were present that would be suitable to support a bat roost, as such TR05 was assessed as NONE, in relation to its potential to support roosting bats.

Tree TR06 comprised an oak along the southwestern boundary of the site. A single PRF was identified on the southern aspect of the tree, comprising an upturned knothole on a low lateral branch at approximately 2m. The feature extended back a small way and as such would be suitable to support a roost for an individual or low number of bats and was subsequently assessed as PRF-I in relation to its potential to support roosting bats. No other PRFs were present on TR06.

Assessment

The site is currently an active construction site, and eight of the ten trees that had previously been assessed as providing low/moderate levels of suitability for roosting bats have been felled.

Two trees (TR05 and TR06) have been retained as part of the development and have been re-categorised via ground level assessments. TR05 has been classified as having no suitability for roosting bats (NONE), while TR06 was assessed as having suitability for an induvial or small number of roosting bats (PRF-I).

No further consideration for roosting bats is required in regard TR05.

However, TR06 has the potential to support a small number of roosting bats. The latest database from the Bat Tree Habitat Key (Bat Conservation Truust, 2024) holds 145 records of various species of bats using similar features (knot wounds) as a roost on oak trees, suggesting that similar features to that present on TR06 are regularly used by roosting bats.

It is understood that both TR05 and TR06 are to be retained within the development and both trees are currently fenced off from construction activities. The eastern extent of the site bounds a railway that is lined by various trees and likely acts as a commuting corridor for bats within the locality of the site. The northern extent of the site. at present, comprises grassland fields with small areas of scrub and scattered trees. With other areas of grassland present to the west. Connectivity to the surrounding area is relatively low with no direct links present and as such bat activity is anticipated to be relatively low on site. A block of woodland is present to the north-west of the site that has the River Alyn flowing through the centre and is anticipated to be the habitat of highest value to bats locally.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Natural Resources Wales are consulted and informed of the loss of trees TR01-T04 and TR07 – TR10, without further survey work. Suitable compensation measures should be discussed.

It is our opinion that four bat boxes of various specifications are installed at suitable locations around the site extent prior to the completion of the construction phase. These boxes could include:

- 1 x 1FS Schwegler Large Colony Bat Box
- 1 x 2F Schwegler Bat Boxes
- 1 x 3FN Schwegler Bat Box
- 1 x 1FD Schwegler Bat Box

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,



Jake Healy

Ecologist, MSc, ACIEEM

URBAN GREEN

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Figure 1. Photographs of the Site



Photograph 1: Active residential estate at south-western extent of site



Photograph 2: Active construction zone within centre of site



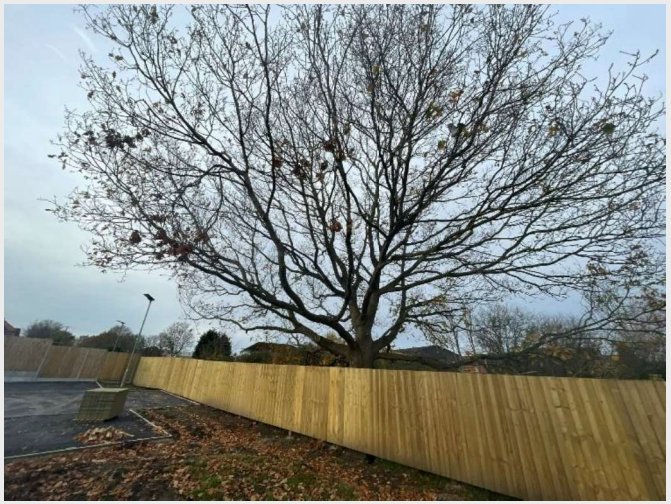
Photograph 3: Active construction zone within centre of site



Photograph 4: Tro5 (NONE) – Located in central copse, fenced off from construction works



Photograph 5: Heras fencing securing central copse feature



Photograph 6: TR06 (PRF-I) – Southeastern boundary of site



Photograph 7: TR06 (PRF-I) – Knot wound on lower lateral limb on southern aspect at 2m