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BAT SCOPING SURVEY

At

Bridgeway Centre

Bridge Road
Wrexham
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Toby Hart', is positioned below the 'Approved by:' line.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is written by Emily Clark BSc PGdip ACIEEM, Ecologist at United Environmental Services Ltd (UES). It provides an assessment of the potential impacts on bats as a result of the proposed commercial development at the Bridgeway Centre, Wrexham.

A bat scoping survey was undertaken on 24th June 2020. The objective of the survey was to establish the suitability of the buildings on site to support roosting bats, based on a site specific survey and habitat assessment. The buildings were searched externally and internally (where accessible) for bat presence and features associated with bat activity, as detailed in Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidance (2016).

The Bridgeway Centre is situated within Wrexham Industrial Estate, located to the south east of Wrexham. The habitats on site include several buildings, associated car parking and access roads, areas of amenity grassland and introduced shrub. There is also a small area of plantation woodland and scrub located within the southern section of the site. However, the area is well-lit with security lighting and nearby street lighting, reducing the suitability foraging and commuting bats.

There are ten buildings at the Bridgeway Centre, eight of which are due to be demolished under the proposed development plans. Buildings 1, 2, 4 and 7 have been assessed as having low potential to support roosting bats. Although no evidence of roosting bats was recorded during the scoping survey, there are potential roosting features (PRFs) which are suitable for use by roosting bats.

No PRFs were recorded for all other buildings on site and no evidence of roosting bats was observed during the survey. As such, these buildings (Buildings 3, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10) have been assessed as having negligible potential for roosting bats. Therefore, no further surveys or specific mitigation measures are required for works of demolition to these buildings, with regard to bats.

Building 1 will not be impacted by the proposed development, however it is recommended that a single presence / absence survey is undertaken to determine whether or not bats are using the building to roost. The survey results will inform if any mitigation measures are required to avoid indirect impacts on bats as a result of the proposed development e.g. through noise or light disturbance.

Buildings 2, 4 and 7 will be demolished as part of the proposed development. Therefore, a single bat presence / absence survey of each building is required in order to determine whether or not bats are using the buildings to roost.

In summary, a single presence / absence survey is required for each building that has been assessed as having low potential to support roosting bats (Buildings 1, 2, 4 and 7) in order to determine whether or not bats are using the buildings to roost. These surveys should be undertaken by an appropriately licenced ecologist during the peak bat survey season, May to August inclusive.

The report should be read in conjunction with appendices 1 to 4, which give visual representations of the survey results.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Author, surveyors and qualifications

This report is compiled and written by Emily Clark BSc PGdip ACIEEM, UES Ecologist. Emily is licensed by Natural Resources Wales to disturb, take and handle all species of bats under licence number S087701/1.

Emily has the knowledge, skills and experience identified within CIEEM's "Competencies for Species Survey: Bats" (2013).

1.2 Survey objectives

UES was commissioned in June 2020 to conduct site surveys which include the following activities:

- Conduct internal and external building inspections to look for field signs of bats
- Assess the suitability of the buildings for use by roosting bats
- Recommend further surveys, mitigation and compensation, where appropriate

1.3 Proposed development

The proposals include the demolition of eight existing commercial units and construction of 10 commercial units within the same site boundary with associated landscape and car parking.

1.4 Structure of the report

This report sets out the methodology, results, and recommendations in relation to a specific bat survey. Recommendations are in line with statutory legislation and planning policy objectives.

The report should be read in conjunction with appendices 1 to 4, which give visual representations of the survey results.



2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 General

All surveys were carried out to recognised guidelines, timings and weather conditions, with particular reference to Natural England and BCT publications (see references for further information).

The habitats on site and in the surrounding area were assessed during a walkover survey and by studying aerial photographs, in order to gauge their suitability to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats.

2.2 Building survey

The buildings on site were searched both externally and internally for bat presence and features associated with bat activity, as detailed in BCT guidance (Collins, 2016). This was conducted on 24th June 2020 by Emily Clark.

2.2.1 External inspection

The external inspection of the buildings on site was carried out from ground level using binoculars, and also using ladders and an endoscope to investigate suitable gaps. The objective of the survey was to find and record any signs of bat use, for example:

- Bat droppings
- Feeding remains
- Grease staining / urine marks
- Corpses or skeletons

The bat signs listed above are visible from the outside of a building. The following areas were searched, where present:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| • Roof and ridge tiles | • Gaps under felt |
| • Lead flashing | • Cracks / holes in woodwork or behind cladding |
| • Eaves | • Gaps in brickwork and mortar |
| • Boxed soffits | • Air bricks |
| • Fascia and barge boards | • Grills |
| • Window sills and panes | • Vents |
| • Walls | |

2.2.2 Internal inspection

The internal inspection covered all of the accessible rooms and roof spaces within the buildings.

Bats regularly utilise specific areas within roof spaces, which were searched for any field signs of bats using high-powered torches and an endoscope, where considered necessary by the licenced ecologist. The following features were searched, where present:

- Roof beams and junctions



- Gaps under felt
- Dividing walls
- Chimney breasts
- Gaps in brickwork and mortar
- Cracks / holes in woodwork
- Floor or other surfaces on which droppings could accumulate

2.3 Survey limitations

All buildings were occupied at the time of the survey so full internal inspections were not possible. External inspections and part internal inspections were undertaken and sufficient information was gathered to make a robust assessment as to the potential for the buildings to support roosting bats.



3 RESULTS

3.1 Habitat assessment

Bridgeway Centre is situated within Wrexham Industrial Estate, located to the south east of Wrexham. The habitats on site include several buildings, associated car parking and access roads, areas of amenity grassland and introduced shrub. There is also a small area of plantation woodland and scrub located within the southern section of the site. However, the area is well-lit with security lighting and nearby street lighting, reducing the suitability foraging and commuting bats.

The immediate surrounding area is similar in composition, with light industry present in all directions. However, the industrial sites are intersected with pockets of woodland and an unnamed watercourse. These are connected to larger areas of woodland, rough grassland, waterbodies and River Clywedog located approximately 450m south of the site. These habitats will provide moderate quality foraging, commuting and roosting opportunities for bats in the local area.

In the wider surrounding area, the habitats are similar in composition; light industry intersected by woodland and watercourses. Habitats beyond the industrial estate improve in quality with hedge lined pasture fields, numerous waterbodies and blocks of woodland. These habitats will provide higher quality foraging, commuting and roosting opportunities for bats.

3.2 Building survey

3.2.1 External inspection

There are ten buildings at the Bridgeway Centre, eight of which are due to be demolished under the proposed development plans. These buildings have been numbered for the purposes of the report (see Appendix 1 – Site plan).

Building 1 is used multi-purpose single-storey commercial building, used for offices and retail. The building is an 'L' shape and is constructed from brick with a flat roof lined with 1F bitumen roofing felt. The brickwork and roof are in excellent condition. There is a small amount of wooden cladding present on the eastern and western aspects of the building which is tightly sealed. Metal boxed soffits are also present on several aspects of the building. There is one gap in the brickwork immediately below the boxed soffit on the southern aspect of the building (see Appendix 3, Photographs, Photograph 3). The windows have a mixture of wooden window frames and UPVC, all of which are in good condition. There is a small extension on the south eastern aspect of the building. The extension is constructed of corrugated metal with a flat roof lined with 1F bitumen roofing felt.

Building 2 is a similar design but is rectangular in shape and has been painted white. There are wooden barge boards present on all aspects of the building and are mostly in good condition. However, the fascia board on the western aspect is broken and lifted (Photograph 9 and 10).

Building 3 is a single storey rectangular building used for offices. It is constructed of corrugated metal with a flat roof lined with 1F bitumen roofing felt. Most of the roof is in good condition and tightly sealed. However, there is one small section which is lifted on the southern aspect (Photograph 13). However, this was fully inspected, and the gap is superficial and does not provide suitable roosting opportunities for bats. Furthermore, no



evidence of roosting bats was recorded within the feature. The windows are modern UPVC whilst the doors are metal. All windows and doors are in excellent condition.

Building 4 is a single storey rectangular building. The walls are constructed of breeze block with wooden cladding. The cladding is in excellent condition and tightly sealed. There is an extension on the eastern aspect of the building which is constructed of brick. All roofs are flat and lined with 1F bitumen roofing felt. Wooden barge boards are present on all aspects of the building. There is a gap on the fascia board on the eastern aspect where some wood has come away (Photograph 15). The barge board on the southern aspect of the brick extension is also slightly lifted (Photograph 16). The window frames are a mixture of wooden and UPVC, but all are in excellent condition. The doors are also in excellent condition and tightly sealed.

Building 5 is a single storey rectangular building used as both offices and a workshop. The walls are constructed of breeze block with corrugated metal cladding. There is a small extension on the eastern aspect which is a similar design. The roofs are lined with 1F bitumen roofing felt that is in excellent condition and tightly sealed. There are two metal roof lanterns present in the centre of the building. There is lead flashing present around the lanterns which is tightly sealed. The windows frames are wooden, and windows are single glazed. The windows are in poor condition but no suitable cracks or crevices for bats were recorded.

Building 6 is a brick built rectangular building that is a similar design to Building 2. Building 6 is currently unoccupied. The roof, wooden barge boards and brick work are in excellent condition.

Building 7 is a brick built rectangular building that is a similar design to Building 2. There is a small extension on the western aspect which is constructed of corrugated metal. The roof and walls are in excellent condition. The wooden barge board on the eastern aspect is slightly lifted which is a PRF for roosting bats.

Building 8 is a brick built rectangular building that is a similar design to Building 2. Building 8 is currently unoccupied and the windows are boarded with chipboard which is tightly sealed. The roof, wooden barge boards and brick work are in excellent condition.

Building 9 is a similar design to Building 2 and is currently used as a garage for repairing cars. The roof, wood barge boards and brick work are in excellent condition.

Building 10 is a small square brick built local electricity sub-station. The roof is flat and lined with 1F bitumen roofing felt. The brick work and roof are in excellent condition with no gaps or crevices recorded.

No bats or bat field signs were recorded during the external building inspection.

3.2.2 Internal inspection

The buildings do not have any internal roof voids or loft spaces.



4 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Evaluation of results

4.1.1 Qualitative assessment of foraging habitats

The Bridgeway centre is located in Wrexham Industrial Estate. The habitats on site are of low quality for foraging and commuting bats. The small areas of woodland and scrub will provide some suitable habitat for bats, however, the area within the vicinity of the site is well-lit with street and security lighting from the industrial estate, which reduces the suitability of the habitats for foraging and commuting bats.

Offsite habitats within the immediate surrounding area are better in quality. The woodland corridors and areas of rough grassland, waterbodies and watercourses will provide higher quality opportunities for roosting, foraging and commuting bats. However, habitats further afield are of superior quality with larger areas of woodland, hedge-lined agricultural fields and numerous waterbodies.

4.1.2 Qualitative assessment of roosting habitats

The quality of roosting habitats within the following buildings is low:

- Building 1
- Building 2
- Building 4
- Building 7

The survey recorded a low number of external PRFs such as gaps under the barge boards on the buildings.

No PRFs were recorded for all other buildings on site and no evidence of roosting bats was recorded during the survey. As such, these buildings (**Building 3, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10**) have been assessed as having negligible potential for roosting bats. Therefore, no further surveys or specific mitigation measures are required for these buildings, with regard to bats.

4.2 Mitigation and enhancement measures

4.2.1 Mitigation

Although no evidence of roosting bats was recorded during the scoping survey there are PRFs which are suitable for use by roosting bats within the following buildings:

- Building 1
- Building 2
- Building 4
- Building 7

Building 1 will not be impacted by the proposed development, however it is recommended that one further bat presence / absence survey is undertaken to determine whether or not bats are using the building to roost. This survey should be undertaken by an appropriately licenced ecologist during the peak bat survey season, May to August inclusive. The survey results will inform if any mitigation measures are required to reduce any indirect impacts on bats as a result of the proposed development e.g. noise and light disturbance.



Building 2, 4 and 7 will be demolished as part of the proposed development. Therefore, a single bat presence / absence survey of each building is required in order to determine whether or not bats are using the buildings to roost. The surveys should be undertaken by an appropriately licenced ecologist during the peak bat survey season, May to August inclusive. In addition, if the presence of bats is established during the survey, further roost characterisation surveys may be required to assess the type and importance of roosts in order to inform the planning process.

The presence / absence survey results will need to be submitted to the local planning authority (LPA) as part of the planning application. Furthermore, any further mitigation or compensation measures will need to be detailed in a bat method statement and submitted to and agreed with the LPA prior to a planning decision. It should be noted that these further measures may include an application for a European protected species (EPS) mitigation licence from Natural Resources Wales, which can be completed once planning permission is granted.

4.2.2 Enhancement

The proposed development also presents an opportunity to enhance the habitats on site and create roosting opportunities to benefit bats in the local area. It is recommended that bat boxes should be included within the proposed development scheme.

Bat boxes suitable for the site include:

- Schwegler 1FF box (affixed to trees or buildings)
- Schwegler 2F box (affixed to trees or buildings)
- Schwegler 1FW hibernation box (affixed to trees)

Bat boxes should be sited with the aid of the project ecologist, taking into consideration potential disturbance from artificial lighting and noise. Once bats have inhabited a bat box they may only be disturbed by a licensed bat ecologist.



5 CONCLUSION

Bridgeway Centre is situated within Wrexham Industrial Estate, located to the south east of Wrexham. The habitats on site include several buildings, associated car parking and access roads, areas of amenity grassland and introduced shrub. There is also a small area of plantation woodland and scrub located within the southern section of the site. However, the area is well-lit with security lighting and nearby street lighting, reducing the suitability foraging and commuting bats.

Buildings 1, 2 4 and 7 have been assessed as having low potential to support roosting bats. Although no evidence of roosting bats was recorded during the scoping survey there are PRFs which are suitable for use by roosting bats.

Building 1 will not be impacted by the proposed development, however it is recommended that a single bat presence / absence survey is undertaken to determine whether or not bats are using the building to roost. The survey results will inform if any mitigation measures are required to reduce any indirect impacts on bats as a result of the proposed development.

Building 2, 4 and 7 will be demolished as part of the proposed development. Therefore, a single bat presence / absence survey of each building is required in order to determine whether or not bats are using the buildings to roost.

All surveys should be undertaken by an appropriately licenced ecologist during the peak bat survey season, May to August inclusive. In addition, if the presence of bats is established during the survey, further roost characterisation surveys may be required to assess the type and importance of roosts in order to inform the planning process.

No PRFs were recorded for all other buildings on site and no evidence of roosting bats was recorded during the survey. As such, these buildings (Buildings 3, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10) have been assessed as having negligible potential for roosting bats. Therefore, no further surveys or specific mitigation measures are required for works to proceed to these buildings, with regard to bats.



6 REFERENCES

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2013). *Competencies for Species Survey: Bats*.

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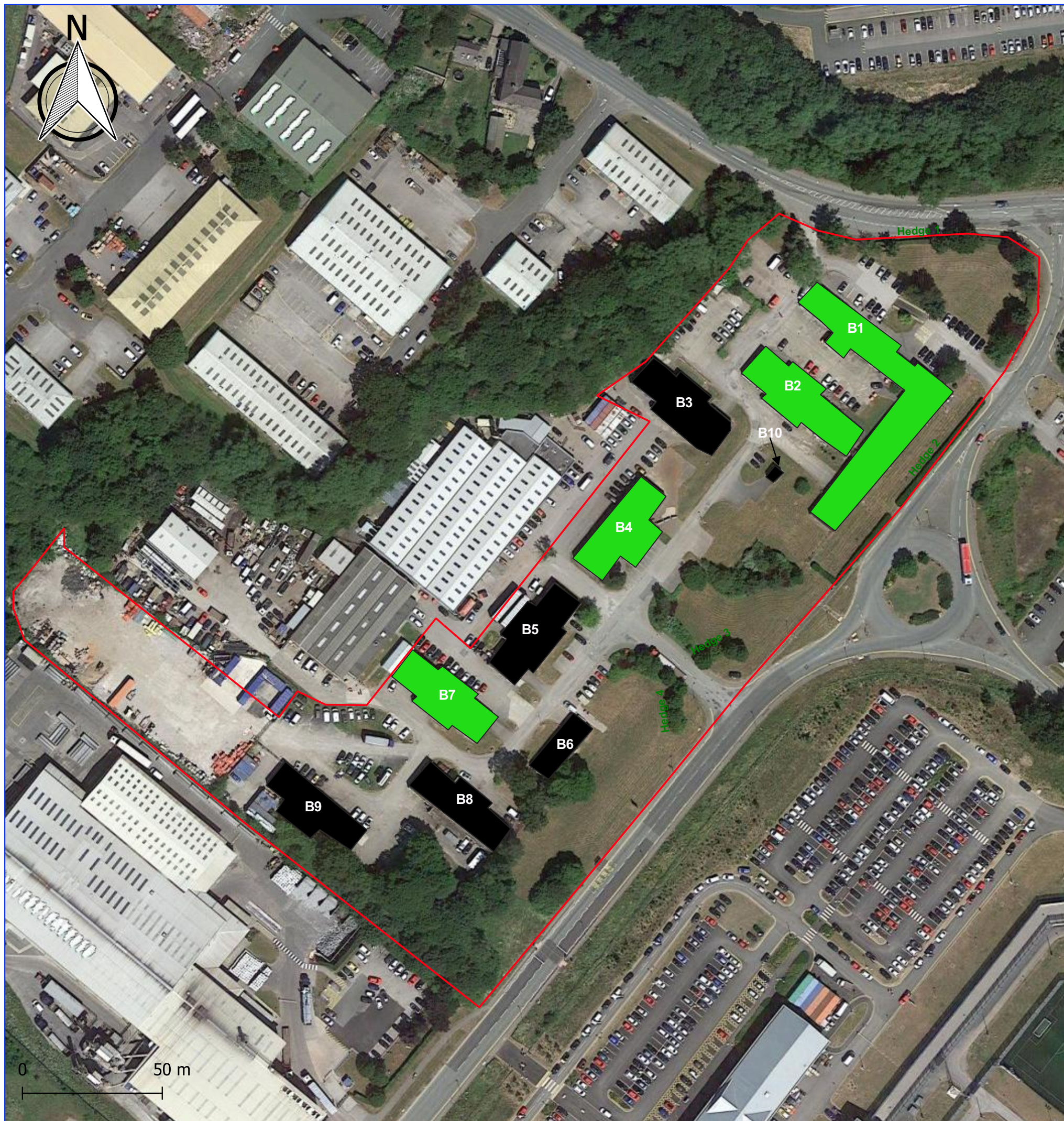
Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004). *The Bat Workers Manual*. (3rd ed.) JNCC

Welsh Government (2018). Planning Policy Wales, edition 10



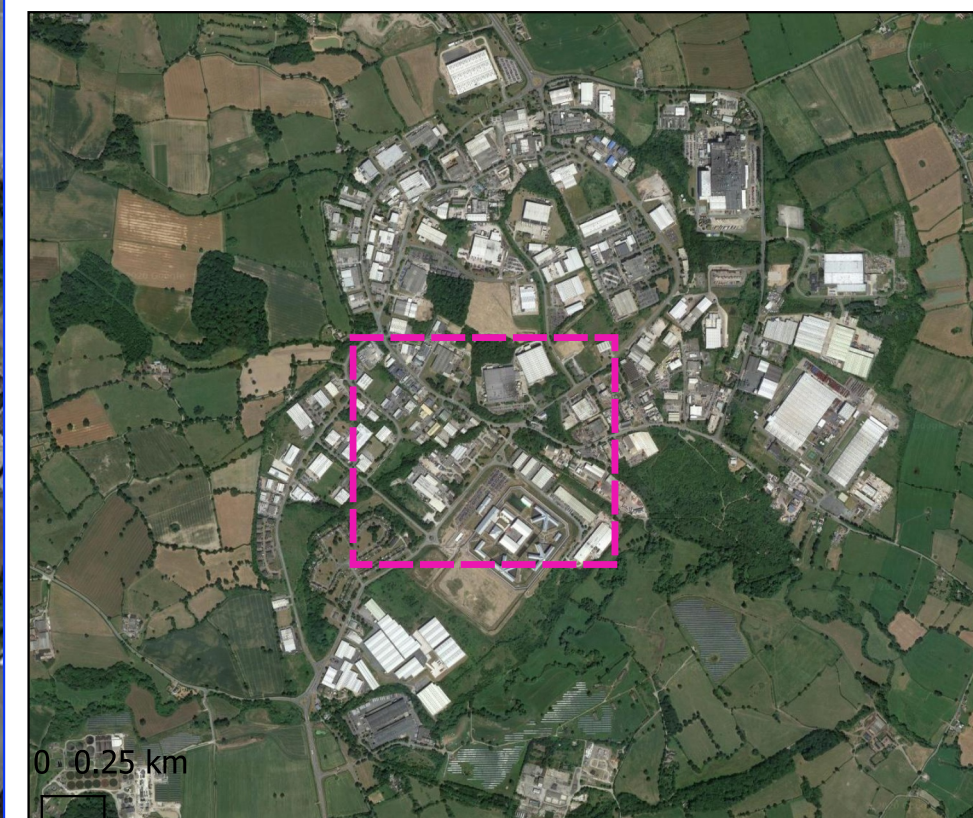
APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Site plan



Site plan

**Site: Bridgeway Centre,
Wrexham**
NGR: (SJ) 337766 349382
Author: Emily Clark
Date: 21/07/2020



KEY:

- Survey boundary
- Buildings
- Low bat roost potential
- Negligible bat roost potential

THIS PLAN IS BASED UPON MAP DATA © 2020 Google, Imagery © 2020 Google

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Appendix 2 – Aerial photographs



Bridgeway Centre, Wrexham

Close aerial photograph

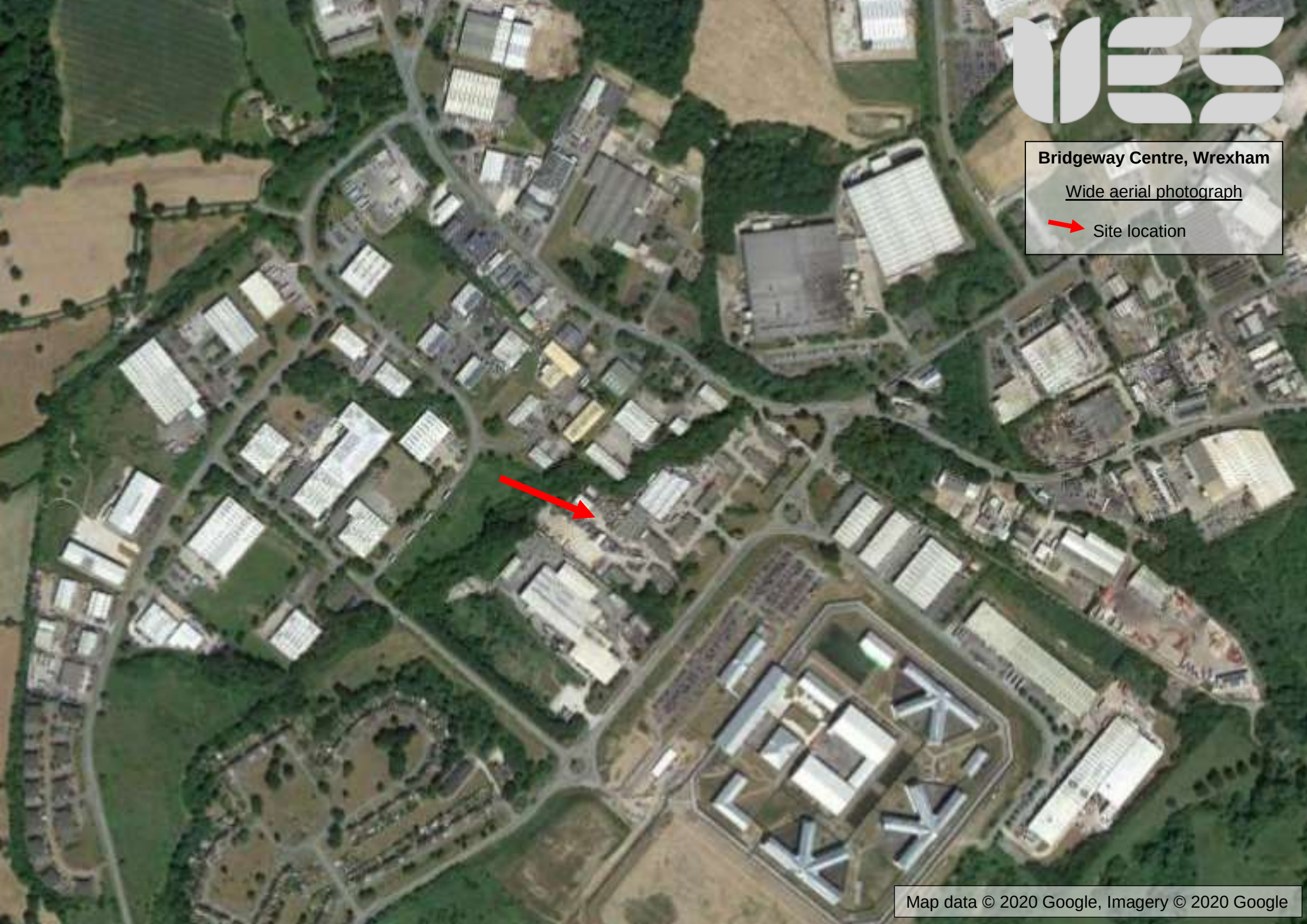
— Development boundary



Bridgeway Centre, Wrexham

Wide aerial photograph

→ Site location





Appendix 3 – Photographs



Photograph 1 – Eastern aspect of Building 1.



Photograph 2 – Southern aspect of Building 1.



Photograph 3 - Gap in brickwork on southern aspect of Building 1.



Photograph 4 – Arrow to show location of gap in brickwork.



Photograph 5 – Southern aspect of Building 1.



Photograph 6 – Northern aspect of Building 1.



Photograph 7 – Northern aspect of Building 2.



Photograph 8 – Northern and western aspect of Building 2.



Photograph 9 – Broken fascia board on Building 2, western aspect.



Photograph 10 – Gap in fascia board on Building 2, western aspect.



Photograph 11 – Western and southern aspect of Building 2.



Photograph 12 – Western and southern aspect of Building 3.



Photograph 13 – Slightly lifted roofing felt on Building 3.



Photograph 14 – Eastern aspect of Building 4.



Photograph 15 – Gap in fascia on eastern aspect of Building 4.



Photograph 16 – Southern aspect of Building 4, arrow pointing to gap in barge board.



Photograph 17 – Close view of gap in barge board on southern aspect of Building 4.



Photograph 18 – Eastern aspect of Building 4.



Photograph 19 – Eastern aspect of Building 4.



Photograph 20 – Southern and eastern aspect of Building 5.



Photograph 21 – Western aspect of Building 5.



Photograph 22 - Southern and western aspect of Building 6.



Photograph 23 – Eastern aspect of Building 8.



Photograph 24 – Northern aspect of Building 9.



Photograph 25 – Western and southern aspect of Building 10.



Appendix 4 – Statutory and planning context

Ecological assessments

Ecological assessments play an important part within the planning context; they include an initial assessment which highlights any specific interests of a site. From the initial site assessment, the surveyor assesses the suitability of habitats within the site to support protected species and makes recommendations for further survey works if required. The following paragraphs provide a brief interpretation of the legislative protection that is relevant to the findings of this report.

Bats

In the United Kingdom, all species of bat and their roosts are afforded full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the “Habitats Regulations”). The Wildlife and Countryside Act is the domestic implementation of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (the Bern Convention) and was amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture a bat
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection (even if the bat is not present at the time)
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any live or dead bat, any part of a bat or anything derived from a bat

Under UK law, a bat roost is *any structure or place which any wild [bat] ... uses for shelter or protection*. As bats often reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that a roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time of the activity taking place.

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

If an activity is likely to result in any of the above offences, a licence can be applied for to derogate from the protection afforded. These licences must provide appropriate mitigation and are issued by National Resources Wales (NRW).

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 lists the following bat species as species of principle importance under Section 41:

- Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*
- Bechstein’s bat *Myotis bechsteinii*
- Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*
- Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*
- Brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*
- Greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*
- Lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*

Section 40 requires every public body in the exercising of its functions ‘have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity’ (all biodiversity and not just section 41 species and habitats); therefore making these bats a material consideration in the planning process and requiring a detailed ecological bat survey before planning permission can be granted.

Planning Policy

National planning guidance is issued in the form of Planning Policy Wales (PPW - 2018). The most relevant sections are included in Chapter 6: Distinctive and Natural Places. This chapter details the policies on issues such as the protection of trees, woodlands, species, and designated sites. The document is free and available to view online.