Hayes Digital Park (Heathrow Interchange Site, Units 3 & 4)

Ecological Considerations to Inform Building Demolition

February 2025

Quality Management	
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Contents

Text:

Plans:

Appendices:

Executive Summary

i) **Introduction.** Aspect Ecology has been commissioned by Colt Data Centre Services to undertake an appraisal of Hayes Digital Park (Heathrow Interchange Site, Units 3 & 4), to inform the demolition of the onsite building.

ii) **Proposals.** Demolition consent is being sought for Units 3 & 4 in advance of a future planning application at the site.

iii) **Survey.** A detailed visual internal and external inspection survey of Units 3 & 4 was undertaken in July 2024, along with a high-level appraisal of the habitats within the site.

iv) **Bats.** Units 3 & 4 are considered to have negligible potential to support roosting bats. The building and voids are in good condition. None of the on-site trees have been identified to have features suitable to support roosting bats. As such, this species group is considered to be likely absent from the site and therefore the proposed demolition works are reasonably unlikely to cause an offence under Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Accordingly, no specific mitigation or licensing is required to facilitate the demolition.

v) **Other Protected Species.** The buildings and surrounding vegetation have potential to support nesting birds. To avoid a potential offence under the relevant legislation, the methodology in Appendix 6890/1 should be followed. In summary, no clearance of suitable vegetation should be undertaken during the bird-nesting season (1st March to 31st August inclusive). If this is not practicable, any potential nesting habitat to be removed should first be checked by a competent ecologist in order to determine the location of any active nests. Any active nests identified would then need to be cordoned off (minimum 5m buffer) and protected until the chicks have fledged. These checking surveys would need to be carried out no more than three days in advance of vegetation clearance or building demolition.

vi) **Other ecological considerations.** A single Giant Hogweed plant was identified in the north-western corner of the site. As such, it is recommended that appropriate safeguards be put in place to both protect personal involved in demolition work and prevent the spread of the Schedule 9 species during the proposed demolition works.

vii) **Summary.** Based on the evidence obtained from the survey work undertaken, it is considered that the proposed demolition, if undertaken in line with the recommended safeguards set out within this report, will have no adverse effect on protected species.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and Proposals

1.1.1 Aspect Ecology has been commissioned by Colt Data Centre Services to undertake an appraisal of Hayes Digital Park (Heathrow Interchange Site, Units 3 & 4, hereafter referred to as building **'B10'**), with specific regard to roosting bats, centred at grid reference TQ 11441 80347.

1.1.2 Demolition consent is being sought for building B10 in advance of a future planning application at the site.

1.2 Purpose of the Report

1.2.1 This report documents the methods and findings of the ecology survey carried out, in order to establish the existing ecological interest and the status of roosting bats (and other ecological considerations) at Hayes Digital Park (Heathrow Interchange Site, Units 3 & 4), and subsequently provide an appraisal of the likely ecological effects of the proposed demolition. Where necessary, avoidance, mitigation, and compensation measures are proposed so as to safeguard any significant existing ecological interest within the site and where appropriate, opportunities for ecological enhancement are identified with reference to national conservation priorities.

2 Legislation and Ecology

2.1 Bats

Legislation

2.1.1 All British bats are classed as European Protected Species and therefore receive protection under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, making it an offence to:

- Deliberately kill, injure or capture bats;
- Deliberately disturb bats, including in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to reproduce or to rear or nurture their young, or their ability to hibernate or migrate, or which is likely to affect significantly their local distribution or abundance;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat.

2.1.2 In addition, all British bats are also listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which contains further provisions making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- Damage or destroy, or obstruct access to, any structure or place which any bat uses for shelter or protection; or
- Disturb bats while occupying a structure or place used for that purpose.

2.1.3 Some species, such as Barbastelle bat *Barbastelle barbastellus*, Greater Horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, Lesser Horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, and Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*, are additionally listed as Species of Principle Importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

2.1.4 If proposed development work is likely to destroy or disturb bats or their roosts a licence may need to be obtained from Natural England which would be subject to appropriate measures to safeguard bats. Bats are also UK/Local BAP priority species.

Ecology

2.1.5 There are at least 17 breeding bat species in Britain. Many of them are considered threatened due to a variety of factors including habitat loss and disturbance/damage to roosts. Of these species, a number regularly use bridges as roost sites.

2.1.6 Bats are highly mobile flying mammals which, in Britain, feed entirely on insects. They are able to fly and feed in the dark by using a system of echolocation that gives them a 'sound picture' of their surroundings.

2.1.7 In winter, when prey is scarce, British bats hibernate in humid parts of buildings, caves, or hollow trees where temperatures are typically stable. They may wake occasionally but only become fully active again in the spring.

2.1.8 Like other mammals, bats have fur and give birth to live young. Female bats gather together in maternity roosts in summer to give birth and rear their single offspring. Infant bats suckle on their mother's milk for several weeks until they can fly and hunt insects for themselves. Bats are long-lived mammals, and some British species are known to live to over twenty-five years of age.

2.2 Birds

Legislation

2.2.1 All wild birds and their nests receive protection under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) in respect of killing and injury, and their nests, whilst being built or in use, cannot be taken, damaged or destroyed. Species included on Schedule 1 of the Act receive greater protection and special penalties apply to legal offences.

2.3 Invasive Species

Legislation

2.3.1 A number of invasive species are listed on Schedule 9 Part II of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is an offence to cause to grow in the wild, any plant listed on the schedule.

3 Methodology

3.1 Desktop Study

3.1.1 In order to compile background information on the site and its immediate surroundings information on statutory designations was obtained from the online Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) database, which utilises data provided by Natural England and Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL) was contacted in July 2024, with data requested on the basis of a search radius of 2km.

3.2 General site appraisal

3.2.1 The site was subject to a high-level survey in July 2024 in order to ascertain the general ecological value of the land contained within the boundaries of the site and to identify the main habitats and ecological features present.

3.3 Bats[1]

Preliminary Appraisal

3.3.1 A review was undertaken of the desk study information obtained to identify any known constraints in relation to bats, the bat species recorded and habitats likely to be used by bats within the site and the surrounding area. This included a review of background records, known designations including SACs or SSSIs relevant to bats and an appraisal of OS mapping and aerial photography to identify habitats likely to be of value to bats.

3.3.2 During the initial habitat survey, the potential suitability of the site for bats in relation to roosting habitats, potential flight-paths and foraging habitats (termed a 'daytime bat walkover') was investigated. Features were assessed as of negligible, low, moderate or high potential suitability for roosting, foraging and commuting, based on the framework set out under BCT guidance. This appraisal has informed the scope of the survey work undertaken as set out below.

Buildings and Built Structures

3.3.3 **Visual Inspection Surveys.** Buildings and built structures within the site assessed as suitable for use by roosting bats were subject to internal and external inspection surveys using ladders, torches and binoculars where necessary in July 2024.

3.3.4 During the external inspections, particular attention was given to potential roost features or access points, such as broken or lifted roof tiles, lifted lead flashing, soffit boxes, weatherboarding, hanging tiles, and similar, and for any indications of use by bats such as accumulations of bat droppings or staining. Binoculars were used to inspect inaccessible areas more closely.

3.3.5 During the internal inspections, searches were made for evidence of the presence of bats with particular attention paid to any loft voids and locations such as ridge boards, rafters, purlins, gable walls, and mortise joints that may provide potential roost features. Specific searches were made for bat droppings that can indicate present or past use and the extent

[1] Surveys based on: Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023) UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. CIEEM; and Bat Conservation Trust (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn).

of use. Droppings collected during the course of the surveys were visually assessed and attributed to a species where possible on the basis of size/shape/texture[2]. Other signs searched for included the presence of stained areas, feeding remains and corpses.

3.3.6 Building inspection surveys were undertaken by a CL17 (bat survey level 1) licence holder (registration number: 2023-11486-CL17-BAT).

Trees

3.3.7 Trees were assessed for their suitability to support roosting bats based on the presence of features such as holes, cracks, splits or loose bark. Trees were categorised as supporting Potential Roost Features (PRFs), Further Assessment Required (FAR) or supporting no suitable features.

3.3.8 **Ground Level Tree Assessment.** Where practical, trees were subject to a Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) based on relevant guidance[3] with PRFs categorised as PRF-I (only suitable for individual or small numbers of bats) or PRF-M (suitable for multiple bats). Any PRFs identified were inspected using binoculars from ground level for any signs indicating possible use by bats, such as staining, scratch marks or bat droppings. Where accessible from ground level, PRFs were subject to close inspection using a torch.

3.4 Survey Constraints and Limitations

3.4.1 The loft voids within building **B10** were not fully accessible due to their structure, being located above a false ceiling, albeit holes within this false ceiling allowed a view into the void. It is therefore considered that a robust assessment of the site with regard to bats has been undertaken.

3.5 Ecological Evaluation Methodology

3.5.1 The evaluation of ecological features and resources is based on professional judgement whilst also drawing on the latest available industry guidance and research. The approach taken in this report is based on that described by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2018)[4], which identifies 'important ecological features' within a defined geographical context (i.e. international, national, regional, county, district, local or site importance). Further details are provided at Appendix 6890/1.

[2] Stebbings, RE, Yalden DW and Herman, JS (2007). Which bat is it? A guide to bat identification in Great Britain and Ireland. The Mammal Society

[3] Bat Conservation Trust (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn).

[4] CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine, ver. 1.3 (updated September 2024)

4 Results

4.1 Habitats and flora

4.1.1 Building B10 dominates the site, along with areas of extensive hardstanding. Aside from these dominant habitats, a number of semi-mature and mature trees are present at the site boundary, some within close proximity to B10, along with small areas of ornamental planting, amenity grassland, scattered scrub, tall ruderal vegetation, and ornamental hedgerows. These habitats all comprise common and widespread species. Additionally, a single Giant Hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum* plant was identified in the north-western corner of the site, whilst the Yeading Brook is located offsite to the east of the site.

Assessment of Proposals

4.1.2 The demolition of building B10 should ideally not affect any other habitats within the site, albeit sections of hedgerow and individual trees are in close proximity to the building. As such, recommendations for safeguarding such habitats are set out in section 5 of this report.

4.1.3 In addition, the stand of Giant Hogweed present within the site needs to be fully considered as part of any demolition works. Giant Hogweed is listed under Schedule 9 Part II of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which makes it an offence to cause to grow in the wild any plant listed on the schedule, whilst the plant can pose a risk to human health. Further discussion of this issue along with recommendations for removing this species are included at Chapter 5.

4.1.4 Finally, all demolition activities should ensure that Yeading Brook is fully safeguarded, and recommendations are set out in section 5.

4.2 Bats

Background records

4.2.1 No specific records of bats from within or adjacent to the site were returned from the desktop study. Information received from the LRC includes a small number of records of Daubenton's Bat *Myotis daubentoniid*, Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, and Pipistrelle bat species *Pipistrelle* sp. within 3km of the site. The closest record is for a Pipistrelle bat located approximately 312m to the south-east from 1994. The most recent record is for Common Pipistrelle located 690m south-east of the site in 2016.

Survey Results and Evaluation

Roosting – Buildings (visual Inspection)

4.2.2 The single building, **B10**, within the site was subject to detailed inspection, the findings of which are provided below.

4.2.3 Building **B10** is a large, two-storey office and warehouse building of brick construction, with an overhanging corrugated metal upper storey and flat roof. The building is largely in active use, although the upper floor offices at the northern end of the building were not in active use at the time of the survey. There are a metal porches in the north-east and south-east corners of the building and warehouse roller doors are present along the eastern aspect of the warehouse. Well-sealed windows run along both stories where offices are present. Some small gaps are present between the overhanging metal roof and brickwork, and there

are some further gaps around wires and pipes which protrude from the building exterior. Externally, building **B10** is largely in good condition.

4.2.4 Internally, **B10** has a number of loft voids. **V10a** is located above the offices at the northern end of the building, above a suspended ceiling and thus was not fully accessible at the time of survey, albeit could be inspected through gaps in the suspended ceiling where ceiling tiles had fallen down. Void **V10a** is of breezeblock and corrugated metal construction, with a single-pitched corrugated metal roof. Fibrous lining was noted to be present in some locations running vertically from floor to ceiling. Loft void **V10b** is located to the east of **V10a** and appears to be separated by a concrete breezeblock wall and is of the same construction**.** Loft void, **V10c**, is located in the south-east of the building, and is of the same construction as **V10a**. The remainder of the building is open to the ceiling and multiple skylights are present. The loft voids present are largely in good condition.

4.2.5 Overall, building **B10** offers negligible roosting opportunities for bats and no evidence of roosting bats was recorded e.g. droppings, staining, feeding remains, etc., during the inspection survey.

Roosting – Trees

Assessment of Roosting Potential

4.2.6 Trees within the site were subject to an initial assessment for their suitability to support roosting bats. Where practical, trees have been subject to a ground level tree assessment (GLTA). No trees within the site were identified to have features suitable to support roosting bats.

4.3 Assessment of Proposals

4.3.1 Building **B10** provides negligible suitability for roosting bats and no evidence of roosting bats was recorded during the survey work undertaken. None of the trees within the site were identified to support features suitable for roosting bats.

4.3.2 As such, it is considered that no specific mitigation or licensing for bats is required. Nonetheless, bats are dynamic animals and as such it remains possible that individuals could colonise the site in the future. Natural England guidance in respect of European Protected Species[5] advises that, even where proposals are reasonably unlikely to result in any offence such that licensing is not required, reasonable precautions should be taken to minimise the risk to protected species in the unlikely event that they should be found during the course of the activity. Accordingly, recommended precautionary mitigation measures are set out at Chapter 5 below and subject to their implementation it is considered that bats will be fully safeguarded under the proposals.

4.4 Birds

4.4.1 Building B10, trees, and shrubs, all have potential to be utilised by nesting birds. As such, safeguards are set out in section 5 to ensure that any nesting birds are fully safeguarded.

[5] Natural England (2013) European Protected Species: Mitigation Licensing - How to get a licence (WML-G12)

5 Mitigation Measures and Recommended Safeguards

5.1 Mitigation and Safeguarding

5.1.1 Based on the results of the survey work completed on site, it is proposed that the following mitigation and safeguarding measures (**MM1-MM5**) are implemented during the demolition works. Further detailed mitigation strategies or method statements can be secured via suitably-worded planning conditions, as recommended by relevant best practice guidance (BS 42020:2019).

Habitats

5.1.2 **MM1 – Hedgerow and Tree Protection.** All hedgerows and trees to be retained during the proposed demolition works should be protected during construction in line with standard arboricultural best practice (BS5837:2012) or as otherwise directed by a suitably competent arboriculturalist. This may require the use of protective fencing or other methods appropriate to safeguard the root protection areas of retained trees and hedgerows.

5.1.3 **MM2 – Pollution Prevention.** In order to safeguard the Yeading Brook, located to the east of the site, against pollution arising from potential run-off or pollution events during demolition, the following safeguards will be implemented:

- Storage areas for chemicals and fuels should be sited well away from the watercourse (minimum 10m). Storage areas should be provided with an impervious base and set within an oil-tight bund with no drainage outlet. Spill kits with sand, earth or commercial products approved for the stored materials should be kept close to storage areas for use in case of spillages;
- Where possible, and with prior agreement of the sewage undertaker, silty water should be disposed of to the foul sewer or via another suitable form of disposal, such as transport by tanker for off-site disposal;
- Water washing of vehicles, particularly those carrying fresh concrete and cement, or mixing plant should be carried out in a contained area located as far from the watercourse as practicable (minimum 10m); and
- Refuelling of plant and vehicles should take place within a designated area, on an impermeable surface, away from the watercourse (minimum 10m).

Bats

5.1.4 **MM3 – Update Survey.** Should any considerable time (e.g. >2 years) elapse between the survey work detailed above and any development works, a further survey of the buildings and trees should be undertaken prior to the commencement of works to confirm the continued absence of bats.

Nesting Birds

5.1.5 **MM4 – Nesting Bird Restrictions.** To avoid a potential offence under the relevant legislation, the methodology in Appendix 6980/1 should be followed. In summary, no clearance of suitable vegetation should be undertaken during the bird-nesting season (1st March to 31st August inclusive). If this is not practicable, any potential nesting habitat to be removed should first be checked by a competent ecologist in order to determine the location of any active nests. Any active nests identified would then need to be cordoned off

(minimum 5m buffer) and protected until the chicks have fledged. These checking surveys would need to be carried out no more than three days in advance of vegetation clearance.

Invasive Species

5.1.6 **MM5 – Invasive Species Safeguards.** Giant Hogweed, which is listed on Schedule 9 Part II of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, was recorded within the site. It is an offence to cause to grow in the wild, any plant listed on the schedule. As such, all relevant precautions should be taken when carrying out actions that could potentially spread these plants. The government has set out guidance on what can be considered 'causing to grow in the wild' within a response to the Schedule 9 review which states:

"*We would expect that where plants listed in Schedule 9 are grown in private gardens, amenity areas etc., reasonable measures will be taken to confine them to the cultivated area so as to prevent their spreading to the wider environment and beyond the landowner's control. It is our view that any failure to do so, which in turn results in the plant spreading to the wild, could be considered as 'causing to grow in the wild' and as such would constitute an offence…Additionally, negligent or reckless behaviour such as inappropriate disposal of garden waste, where this results in Schedule 9 species becoming established in the wild would also constitute an offence*."

5.1.7 As such, it is recommended that appropriate safeguards be put in place to prevent the spread of the Schedule 9 species during the proposed demolition works.

5.1.8 Ideally, demolition works will enable the Giant Hogweed to not be affected, and site staff should be made aware of its presence and the risks associated with this plant.

5.1.9 Should the removal of the Giant Hogweed be required to enable the demolition works, measures would likely involve herbicide application and/or excavation and removal of any material within the site itself (which should then be disposed of appropriately to prevent colonisation of off-site areas). In the event that the Giant Hogweed requires removal to facilitate demolition works, it is strongly recommended that advice from an invasive species contractor is sought for this work, and that only experienced personnel treat/handle the plant, as contact with Giant Hogweed can cause serious skin burns.

6 Conclusions

6.1 Aspect Ecology has been commissioned by Colt Data Centre Services to undertake an ecological assessment, with specific regard to roosting bats, of Hayes Digital Park (Heathrow Interchange Site, Units 3 & 4). Demolition consent is being sought for these units.

6.2 Yeading Brook which lies to the east of the site has the potential to be impacted by the proposals and suitable measures will therefore be implemented to ensure the river corridor is fully safeguarded. The habitats within the site do not comprise important ecological features and, as such, the loss of small areas of these habitats under the proposed demolition is of negligible ecological significance. In any case, safeguards are proposed for the habitats that will be retained during the demolition works. The invasive species Giant Hogweed is present within the site and appropriate safeguards are therefore proposed.

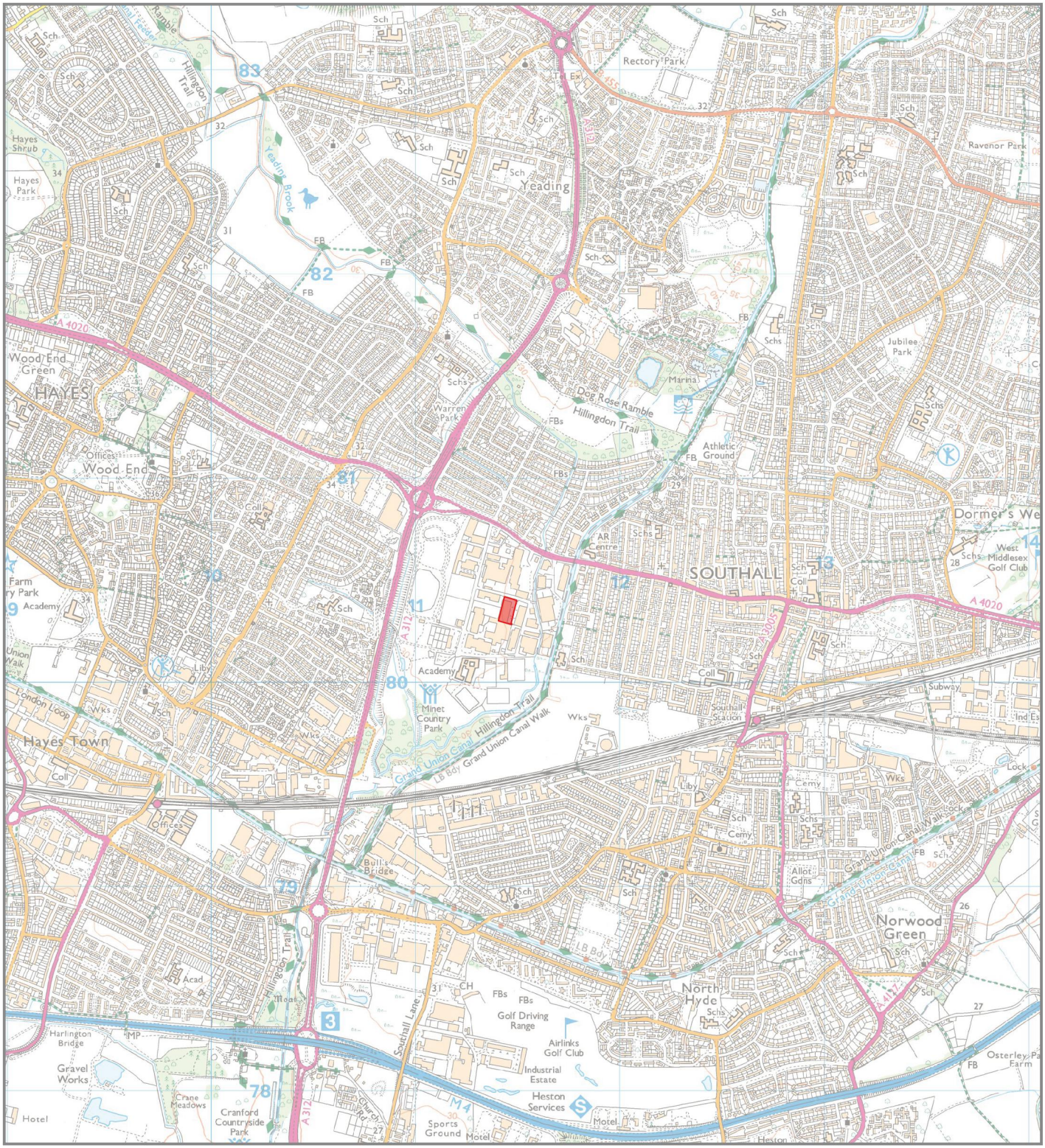
6.3 Specific survey work with respect to roosting bats was undertaken at Hayes Digital Park (Heathrow Interchange Site, Units 3 & 4) in July 2024, comprising a detailed visual internal and external inspection. Units 3 & 4 and the on-site trees were recorded to support negligible potential for roosting bats, and indeed daytime survey work did not identify use of the building or trees by roosting bats. As such, this species group is considered to be likely absent from the site and therefore the proposed demolition works are reasonably unlikely to cause an offence under Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Accordingly, no specific mitigation or licensing is required to facilitate the demolition.

6.4 The habitats within the site have the potential to support nesting birds, accordingly, appropriate mitigation measures have been proposed to minimise the risk of harm to this species group.

6.5 In conclusion, based on the evidence obtained from the detailed survey work undertaken, it is considered that roosting bats are likely absent from the site, and therefore the proposed demolition works will have no adverse effect on their local conservation status.

Plan 6890/PSR1:

Site Location



Key:

Site Location

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Hayes Digital Park (Units 3 & 4)	PROJECT
Site Location	TITLE
6890/PSR1/1	DRAWING NO.
A/BG	REV
December 2024	DATE
LP/BG	QC

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Plan 6890/PSR2:

Habitats and Ecological Features

Key:

- Site Boundary
- Building
- Hardstanding
- Amenity Grassland
- Ornamental Planting
- Tall Ruderal
- Mixed Scrub
- Ornamental Hedge
- Tree
- Scatterd Scrub
- Giant Hogweed

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Hayes Digital Park (Units 3 & 4)	PROJECT
Habitats and Ecological Features	TITLE
6890/PSR2/2	DRAWING NO.
A/BG	REV
December 2024	DATE
LP/BG	QC

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Appendix 6890/1:

Nesting Bird Survey Method Statement

Ecological Method Statement

Clearance of vegetation within the nesting bird season

1 **Legislation**

1.1 All wild birds and their nests receive protection under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) in respect of killing and injury, and their nests, whilst being built or in use, cannot be taken, damaged or destroyed. Species listed in Schedule 1 of the Act receive greater protection and are subject to special penalties.

2 **Method Statement for Vegetation Clearance in Respect of Nesting Birds**

2.1 To avoid any potential offence under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), any clearance of woody vegetation (including Bramble scrub) or tree surgery should be undertaken outside of the bird-nesting season (generally taken to be March to August inclusive).

2.2 If this is not practicable, any vegetation to be removed should first be checked by a suitably qualified ecologist in order to determine the location of any nests prior to removal. Depending on the nature of the vegetation as determined by the suitably qualified ecologist, this may need to include a check survey undertaken immediately following dawn, with a surveyor typically viewing the vegetation over the course of 30 to 60 minutes[1]. In determining the breeding status of birds present within suitable areas of vegetation, the suitably qualified ecologist will apply the following criteria, based on the `Atlas` surveys of 1988-1991 (Gibbons et al, 1993). This accepts the following activities as denoting breeding:

- Adult visiting probable nest site;
- Nest-building (including excavating nest-hole);
- Distraction display or feigning injury;
- Adult carrying faecal sac or food;
- Adult entering or leaving the nest site in circumstances indicating occupied nest;
- Nest with eggs found, or bird sitting but not disturbed, or eggshells found near nest;
- Nest with young; or downy young of ducks, game-birds, waders and other nidifugous species.

2.3 Where a suitably qualified ecologist concludes that no nesting birds are present within the site, clearance work should be completed within 3 days of the completion of the nesting bird survey. By undertaking vegetation clearance works within 3 days of the completion of a check survey, the risk of birds creating nests prior to clearance works commencing is minimised.

2.4 In the event that any nests, or birds exhibiting any of the above nesting behaviour, be identified as part of this check survey, any such nests will be cordoned off and protected until the end of the nesting season or until the birds have fledged. This cordon will provide a buffer zone

[1] Buisson, R. S. K., Wade, P. M., Cathcart, R. L., Hemmings, S. M., Manning, C. J. & Mayer, L. (2008). *The Drainage Channel Biodiversity Manual: Integrating Wildlife and Flood Risk Management.* Association of Drainage Authorities and Natural England, Peterborough.

extending to at least 5m around the nest, in order to prevent on going site works disturbing the nesting birds.

2.5 Site staff will be notified of the presence of birds' nests within the vegetation, and the site manager given a tool box talk to ensure that site staff explicitly understand that no further site works can be undertaken within the cordoned off area until all nesting behaviour is complete. The completion of nesting behaviour will only be confirmed through undertaking further nesting bird survey(s); only when a suitably qualified ecologist has confirmed that nesting birds are no longer present within the area of vegetation in question may clearance works proceed within the previously cordoned off area during the nesting period.

2.6 It should be noted that nesting birds receive protection all year round should they be nesting, albeit the likelihood of birds nesting outside of the nesting season is sufficiently low that clearance works are unlikely to encounter nests, and need not employ formal checks. Nonetheless, site staff should maintain a watching brief at all times of the year and should any nesting birds be encountered at other times of the year, works should immediately cease and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted for further advice.

METHOD STATEMENT SUMMARY

Timings: Any clearance of woody vegetation or tree surgery should ideally be undertaken outside of the bird-nesting season (i.e. outside of March to August inclusive), under a watching brief.

Nesting Bird Safeguards: Should vegetation clearance work be required between March and August (inclusive) then the following formal safeguards need to be employed;

- Any vegetation to be removed should first be checked by a suitably qualified ecologist in order to determine the location of any nests prior to removal;
- Where a suitably qualified ecologist concludes that no nesting birds are present within suitable areas of vegetation, clearance work should be completed within 3 days of the completion of the nesting bird survey;
- In the event that any nests are identified as part of this check survey, any such nests will be cordoned off and protected until the end of the nesting season or until the birds have fledged (as confirmed by a suitably qualified ecologist).

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