

Annex 2 Updated Preliminary Ecology Appraisal and Bat Survey Report



Station Hill, Reading

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

August 2018

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This document has been prepared and checked in accordance with
Waterman Group's IMS (BS EN ISO 9001: 2015, BS EN ISO 14001: 2015 and BS OHSAS 18001:2007)

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Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Methodology	4
3. Results	9
4. Assessment.....	19
5. Ecological Constraints and Opportunities	21
6. Conclusions	25

Figures

Figure 1: 'Extended' Phase 1 Habitat Survey Plan (ref. WIE14788-100_GR_PEA_1A)

Tables

Table 1: Previous Ecological Assessments.....	2
Table 2: Geographical Scale of Important Ecological Feature Categories	4
Table 3: Legally Protected Species	5
Table 4: Bat Roost Potential Ratings.....	6
Table 5: Summary of Black Redstart Survey Parameters.....	7
Table 6: Summary of desk study records of designated sites within 1km of the Site	9
Table 7: Summary of desk study records of flora and fauna within 1km of the Site	10
Table 8: Results of the Preliminary Roost Inspections.....	13
Table 9: Potential Important Ecological Features Anticipated to be Affected by the Development	19
Table 10: Ecological Features Scoped out of the Assessment	19
Table 11: Summary of Additional Ecological Assessments	25

Appendices

- A. Summary of Outline Planning Conditions
- B. Planning Policy and Summarised Flora and Fauna Legislation
- C. Photographs

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Ltd (Waterman) was commissioned by SH Reading Master LLP (hereafter referred to as the 'Client') to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of an area of land known as Station Hill 3 (SH3), which encompasses Plots A - G, located in Reading City Centre (hereafter referred to as the 'Site').
- 1.2. The Site is approximately 2.53 hectares (ha) area and located at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SU 71351 73699. The Site currently comprises buildings, hard standing, ephemeral / short perennial, ornamental planting, scattered trees and walls/fences (**Figure 1**).
- 1.3. The Site is bound by roads/built development on all sides, notably Station Hill to the north, Thames Tower, Garrard Street and Merchants Place to the east, Friar Street to the south and Greyfriars Road and built retail/office/residential development (Sainsburys, Central Studios and Greyfriars House) to the west.

Site History and Development Proposals

- 1.4. An outline planning application for the redevelopment of the Site was submitted by Sackville Developments Reading Ltd (SDRL) in March 2013 (Planning Reference: 130436). The development, known as SH3, includes the demolition of all existing buildings and structures on-Site, excluding the existing multi-storey NCP car park, and replacement with four new commercial buildings (referred to as Building Plots A - D) and two new primarily residential buildings (referred to as building plots E and F). The existing NCP car park would be reconfigured and refurbished. The planning application was granted in January 2015 and is hereafter referred to as the consented scheme.
- 1.5. At the same time, an application was submitted for a temporary flexible event space on 0.35 ha of land within the north of the Site (Planning Application Reference: 130440/FUL). The temporary flexible event space was proposed to operate as an interim condition in the north-eastern part of the Site following demolition of the former Station Hill Retail Arcade (including 26 to 58 Station Hill). The temporary flexible events space was granted permission in January 2014.
- 1.6. Subsequent to submission of the application for SH3, SDRL acquired an area of land adjacent to the SH3 Site, known as the Telecom House site. An application to extend and amend Plot E of the Consented Scheme to incorporate the Telecom House site was submitted in August 2015 (Planning Reference: 151426 and 151427).
- 1.7. Amendments to the 2015 Outline Planning Application were made in December 2015. A reserved matters application was also submitted for Plot B in 2015 and granted approval in August 2016 (Planning Reference: 151543).
- 1.8. Since receiving planning consent, the buildings located within the curtilage of Plots B, C and D have been demolished and the temporary events space has been constructed in the location of Plot C.
- 1.9. With regards to the approved outline planning consents (Planning References 130436 for Plots A-D, F and G; and 151426 and 151427 for Plot E) several ecological planning conditions were attached which are summarised in **Appendix A**. Where relevant, these have been referred in this report.

- 1.10. It is now proposed to submit a prior notification of demolition of Telecom House and Friars Walk Shopping Centre (hereafter referred to as the 'Development') which occupy the areas of Blocks E and F in the SH3 Development. The report also provides information to support future planning applications and / or prior notification of demolition for buildings to the north of Garrard Street including Xfinity House, the NCP Car Park, the Temporary Events Space and the area of land occupied by Blocks B and D of the SH3 Development.'
- 1.11. Previous ecological assessments were undertaken at the Site and wider area between 2005 and 2015 to support the previous planning applications detailed above, as summarised in **Table 1** below. Where relevant, these assessments have been referred to in this PEA.

Table 1: Previous Ecological Assessments

Survey	Date(s)	Area	Description
'Extended' Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Bat Roost Potential Survey	26 May 2005	SH1 site (area to the north of Garrard Street only)	Walkover survey to classify and map all habitats on the Site in accordance with standard Phase 1 habitat survey methodology. In addition, trees and structures were examined to determine if they had the potential to provide bat roosting sites. These were classified on a scale of negligible, low, medium or high potential.
Black Redstart Survey	Visit 1: 26 May 2005 Visit 2: 1 June 2005 Visit 3: 8 June 2005 Visit 4: 15 June 2005 Visit 5: 22 June 2005	SH1 site and the immediate surrounding area (including the Site)	Surveys to detect the presence or absence of black redstarts together with any observations to indicate breeding (e.g. singing males, nesting behaviour or the presence of juveniles).
Updated 'Extended' Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Bat Roost Potential Survey	20 April 2009	SH2 site (area of the Site excluding Telecom House but for a different scheme)	Walkover as described above.
Updated 'Extended' Phase 1 Habitat and Bat Roost Potential Survey	12 August 2011	SH3 site	Walkover as described above.
Updated black redstart Survey	Visit 1: 21 May 2012 Visit 2: 28 May 2012 Visit 3: 14 June 2012 Visit 4: 25 June 2012 Visit 5: 12 July 2012	SH3 site and immediate surrounding area	Survey as described above
Updated 'Extended' Phase 1 Habitat and Bat Roost Potential Survey	13 June 2014	Telecom House site + SH3 site	Walkover as described above.

Survey	Date(s)	Area	Description
Updated black redstart Survey	Visit 1: 10 June 2014 Visit 2: 24 June 2014	SH3 site + Telecom House site	Reduced Surveys to update the presence or absence of black redstarts together with any observations to indicate breeding (e.g. singing males, nesting behaviour or the presence of juveniles).
Bird Survey followed by Inspection of Western Tower	Visit 1: 7 March 2014	Western Tower (Plot B)	Bird survey at dawn followed by a building inspection prior to the erection of specific netting to deter peregrine falcons nesting on the tower prior to demolition works.
Updated Black Redstart Survey	Visit 1: 6 March 2015 Visit 2: 14 May 2015	SH3 site + Telecom House site	Reduced Surveys to update the presence or absence of black redstarts together with any observations to indicate breeding (e.g. singing males, nesting behaviour or the presence of juveniles).

Purpose of this PEA

- 1.12. The PEA has been undertaken in support of a prior notification of demolition for the Site.
- 1.13. As detailed within industry guidance^{1,2}, a PEA should be used to identify any ecological constraints and opportunities at a proposed development site. This PEA will detail the requirement for further ecological surveys to determine if any Important Ecological Features (IEFs) are present within the identified Zone of Influence (Zol). For this Development, the PEA will be used to detail the required ecological mitigation measures to ensure legal compliance.
- 1.14. The PEA will also be used to inform the emerging scheme design process for future planning applications and at this stage will make recommendations for future ecological compensation and enhancement measures.
- 1.15. In summary the purpose of this report is to:
 - Update the ecological baseline data for the Site to support the current prior notification of demolition;
 - Identify the current potential for IEF's to be present within the identified Zone of Influence (Zol) and any resulting constraints or significant ecological effects to the Development;
 - Detail the required ecological mitigation measures to ensure legal compliance (**Appendix B**); and
 - Inform the emerging scheme design process for future planning applications and make initial recommendations for ecological compensation and enhancement measures to ensure compliance with planning policy (**Appendix B**).

¹ CIEEM (2017). *Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing*. Technical Guidance Series.

² CIEEM (2017). *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*. Technical Guidance Series.

2. Methodology

Scope of the Assessment

- 2.1. This section summarises the methodologies used for undertaking the PEA based on current guidelines^{3,4,5}. This PEA included an ecological data search, 'Extended' Phase 1 Habitat Survey, preliminary roost assessments for bats (external only), black redstart survey and a common invasive plant species survey.
- 2.2. The ZoI is the area(s) over which ecological features maybe impacted by the biophysical changes caused by the proposed Development. Based on the scale and nature of the Development, it has been assessed that the ZoI arising from these works is unlikely to be greater than 1km from the centre of the Site. Therefore, this distance has been used to collect the ecological data search information. The 'Extended' Phase 1 Habitat survey area comprised primarily the Site. However, adjacent land was viewed where possible from the Site. As referenced in industry guidance, IEF's that are anticipated to be affected by the Development have been identified and subject to assessment. In this report, designated sites, habitats and species that fall into the categories in **Table 2** and **Table 3** have been identified as being ecologically important and/or legally protected/controlled and form the scope of data gathering during the data search and Site surveys.

Table 2: Geographical Scale of Important Ecological Feature Categories

Geographical Level of Importance	Category
International	Statutory designated sites: Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Ramsar sites (including candidate SACs and proposed SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites)
National	Statutory designated sites: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and National Nature Reserves (NNR) ⁶ ; Ancient Woodland; Habitats and species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity as listed on Schedule 41 of the NERC Act, 2006, including ecologically important hedgerows under the Hedgerow Regulations; and Red List and rare species (using IUNC criteria ⁷) and Birds of Conservation Concern (Red List ⁸)
County	Local Nature Reserves (LNR) Non-statutory designated wildlife sites: known as Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) in Reading; and Local Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and species.

³ Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). *Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing*. Technical Guidance Series.

⁴ Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*. Technical Guidance Series.

⁵ BSI (2013) BS 42020:2013. *Biodiversity - Code of Practice for Planning and Development*.

⁶ DCLG (2018). *National Planning Policy Framework*, paragraph 174.

⁷ <http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/categories-and-criteria>

⁸ https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/bird-and-wildlife-guides/bird-guide/status_explained.aspx

Table 3: Legally Protected Species

Legislation (Summarised in Appendix A)
Species included on Schedules II and IV of The Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2017; Species included on Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), excluding species that are only protected in relation to their sale (Section 9[5] and 13[2]); and Badgers, which are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

Ecological Data Search

- 2.3. The aim of the ecological data search is to collate existing ecological records for the Site and adjacent areas. Obtaining existing records is an important part of the evaluation process, as it provides additional information that may not be apparent during a site survey.
- 2.4. An ecological data search was undertaken in August 2018, during which all records of protected species, and/or other notable fauna and flora within 1km of the Site were requested from Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC)⁹.
- 2.5. Records of important statutory and non-statutory sites designated for their nature conservation value within 1km of the Site were also requested from TVERC and searched for on the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)¹⁰.
- 2.6. Sites with statutory, national or international designations could typically include Local Nature Reserves (LNR), Ancient Woodland, notified or candidate Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserves (NNR), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) or Ramsar sites.
- 2.7. In addition, Habitats of Principal Importance (HoPI) and Species of Principal Importance (SoPI) listed under Section 41 (S41) of the NERC Act¹¹, as well as Species Action Plans (SAPs) and Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) identified by the Reading Biodiversity Action Plan, were consulted to assign an ecological context to the Site.

'Extended' Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.8. An 'Extended' Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the Site was undertaken on 25th July 2018 using the Joint Nature Conservancy Council (JNCC)¹² standard 'Phase 1' survey technique. The Phase 1 Habitat Survey methodology was 'Extended' by undertaking an assessment of the Site to support protected and notable faunal species. All habitat types within the Site were mapped (**Figure 1**) with target notes where appropriate. The survey of the Site was conducted under conditions deemed appropriate for survey (being dry).
- 2.9. Where access allowed, adjacent habitats were also considered to assess the Site within the wider landscape, and to provide information with which to assess possible impacts of the proposed Development.

⁹ Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (August 2018). *Biodiversity Report* Ref: TVERC/18/259.

¹⁰ Magic.defra.gov.uk. (2014). *Magic*. [online] Available at: <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/> [Accessed February 2018].

¹¹ ODPM (2006) 'Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act'

¹² JNCC. (2010). *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey*. Nature Conservancy Council.

- 2.10. A detailed floral species list was collated for the Site during the 'Extended' Phase 1 Habitat Survey. As such, the species list detailed within the results section of this report can be used to inform any future BREEAM reports (specific assessment guidelines dependant).

Preliminary Bat Roost Inspections

- 2.11. As part of the preliminary roost inspection an external building inspection for roosting bats was undertaken in combination with the 'Extended' Phase 1 Habitat Survey. The survey was led by an experienced ecologist who holds a Natural England Class 2 Licence for all bat species and counties of England. The survey was based on current best practice guidelines¹³.
- 2.12. An assessment of the buildings and trees on Site and adjacent was made in terms of their suitability to support roosting bats. The survey consisted of a visual inspection of the exterior of the buildings and trees for evidence of bat use (e.g. droppings, scratch marks, staining and sightings). A number of factors were considered, including internal conditions, presence of features suitable for use by roosting bats, proximity to foraging habitats or cover and potential for disturbance. Notes were made relating to relevant characteristics of features providing potential access points and roosting opportunities for bats. Following the preliminary roost inspections, the buildings and trees were scored as per the criteria set out in **Table 4**, based on adapted current best practice guidelines, to determine its potential to support roosting bats.

Table 4: Bat Roost Potential Ratings

Assigned Bat Roosting Potential	Description
Known or confirmed roost	Evidence of roosting bats within the building or tree.
High	A building or tree with one or more Potential Roost Features (PRFs) that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.
Moderate	A building or tree with one or more PRFs that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only).
Low	A building with one or more PRFs that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these PRFs do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation).
	A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.
Negligible	Building or tree with negligible features likely to be used by roosting bats.

Invasive Plant Species Assessment

- 2.13. The list of invasive plant species included on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is extensive and these plants are found in a range of different habitats, including aquatic habitats. The 'Extended' Phase 1 Habitat Survey checked for the presence of common invasive species including; Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica*, giant knotweed *Fallopia*

¹³ Collins. J, (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines*. Third Edition, Bat Conservation Trust.

sachalinensis, hybrid knotweed *Fallopia baldschuanica*, giant hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum* and Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*.

Black Redstart Survey

- 2.14. A single visit to check the Site for breeding black redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* was undertaken by Bill Haines (experienced ornithologist) on 23rd July 2018. The methodology broadly followed those given in Gilbert *et al*, (1998)¹⁴ and the Black Redstart Action Plan Working Group for London (BRAPWGL)¹⁵ whereby the Site and immediately adjacent areas were walked starting before dawn and birds were looked and listened for at a number of points for a minimum of 3 hours. The NCP Car Park in Garrard Street was used as a suitable point to view from, as it overlooked all the roofs within the Site boundary. An internal search of the NCP Car Park for nests was also made during the survey. **Table 5** below provides a summary of the survey parameters during the black redstart survey.

Table 5: Summary of Black Redstart Survey Parameters

Date	Dawn time	Survey time start / end	Start weather conditions (°C*, BF** & Oktas***)	Finish weather conditions
23.07.18	05:38	04:58-07:40	20°C. BF2, cloud cover 0/8 Oktas, good visibility, dry.	25°C. BF1, cloud cover 0/8 Oktas, excellent visibility, dry.

*Degrees Celsius

**Beaufort Scale (0-12)

***Cloud cover scale (0-8)

IEF Assessment

- 2.15. Data gathered as part of this PEA has been used to identify potential IEFs (i.e. designated sites, habitats and species as listed in **Tables 2** and **3**) that are anticipated to be affected by the Development within the Zol (up to 1km from the Site).
- 2.16. However, not all the IEFs within the Zol have the potential to be significantly affected by the Development, or the legislation pertaining to them to be contravened. Therefore, where features are unlikely to be affected by the Development, or where any effects that impact IEFs are unlikely to be significant, for the reasons¹⁶ listed below, such features have been scoped out of the assessment:
- No pathway of effect has been identified, for example the feature is sufficient distance from the Site or there is the presence of a barrier between its location and the Site¹⁷ ; or
 - The feature is of insufficient biodiversity conservation value within the Zol, due to its quality, extent or population size¹⁸.

¹⁴ Gilbert G, Gibbons DW & Evans J. Bird Monitoring Methods. A manual of techniques for key UK species. RSPB. 1998.

¹⁵ <https://www.blackredstarts.org.uk/pages/sitesurvey.html>

¹⁶ Positive or negative effects on ecological features that have the potential to influence a planning decision are considered to be significant

¹⁷ Whilst the Zol of potential effects arising from the development is up to 1km from the Site, the ecological Zol (within which the feature could be affected) for each feature may vary and for some features may be much less, e.g. great crested newts generally move up to a maximum of 500m from a breeding pond and movement can be restricted by barriers such as busy roads and fast flowing rivers

¹⁸ E.g. whilst a Priority Species such as skylark *Alauda arvensis* or house sparrow *Passer domesticus* is of National importance (**Table 3**), the impact of development on individual or a small population of such a species, which are generally commonly found, is unlikely to be assessed as significant

- 2.17. For all remaining features scoped into the assessment, the pathway of effect (e.g. habitat loss, lighting, noise etc.) and potential impact of this on the feature have been identified.

Constraints and Limitations

- 2.18. Only a single black redstart survey was carried out in 2018. This survey was undertaken late in the season (the latest that previous surveys have been carried out was 12th July in 2012 when the birds were proved breeding within the Site) and it is suspected that any birds that may have been present could have already left the area on post-breeding/natal dispersal and migration. As such, the mitigation and enhancement measures detailed in Section 5 of this report take into account the historical surveys undertaken at the Site and are based on the assumption that black redstarts are still breeding on, or within the vicinity of, the Site.
- 2.19. All other contractors, designers and the client should be aware of the following: The design recommendations within this report are assessed to be the most effective ecological solution at this stage of the project. No other pre-construction information has been provided, obtained or referred to during the preparation of this report (including, but not limited to, services information, geotechnical reports and ordnance reports). In deciding whether and how to progress with this project, it will be incumbent upon the client, designers and contractors to obtain and refer to relevant pre-construction and maintenance information, as required by the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations to ensure compliance. Waterman can assist with the development and co-ordination of this design to support effective risk management on this project upon request.

3. Results

Desk Study

Statutory Sites

- 3.1. There are no statutory designated sites within 1km of the Site.

Non-Statutory Sites

- 3.2. The Site is not located within any non-statutory designated sites. However, there are three non-statutory sites located within 1km of the boundary of the Site, as detailed in **Table 6** below.

Table 6: Summary of desk study records of designated sites within 1km of the Site

Site Name	Designation	Distance from Site Boundary (km)	Description
Kennet and Avon Canal and River Kennet	LWS	0.48km south-east	The River Kennet is one of the best national examples of a chalk river which is a UKBAP priority habitat. The Kennet and Avon canal section is fed by the river and is accordingly, calcareous in nature. This provides rich and varied riparian vegetation together with adjacent habitats.
Holy Brook (south of Berkley Avenue and Berkley Avenue to Inner Distribution Road)	LWS	0.76km south	The Holy Brook stream carries water to and from the River Kennet. It provides a green area between housing, commercial and industrial areas. A number of notable invertebrates have been recorded in Holy Brook and water vole has been recorded in the central and western sections.
Cow Lane Depot	LWS	0.65km west	This small, triangular site bounded by a railway track towards the centre of Reading comprises a mosaic of habitats including willow scrub, standing water, swamp and ruderal grassland. Cow Lane Depot provides an important wildlife corridor in an urban landscape.

Ancient Woodland

- 3.3. There is no Ancient Woodland on or within 1km of the boundary of the Site.

Protected, BAP and Other Notable Species

- 3.4. Records of legally protected or otherwise notable species of flora and fauna within 1km of the Site were provided by TVERC. A summary of the most significant results of relevance to the Site are provided in **Table 7** below. Full results can be obtained from the data providers but cannot be presented in this report as a result of copyright. It should be noted that the distances provided in **Table 7** below are taken from the central grid reference of the Site and therefore are approximate.

- 3.5. Only records where the most recent record has been recorded within the last c.30years have been included in **Table 7**.

Table 7: Summary of desk study records of flora and fauna within 1km of the Site

Species	Category of Importance	Number of Records	Date Range of Records	Distance of closest record from the centre of the Site (km)
Bats				
Common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Hab Regs, WCA, RBAP	10	2009 - 2015	0.34km south-east
Soprano pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	Hab Regs, WCA, S41, RBAP	7	2010 - 2015	0.36km south-east
Pipistrelle sp <i>Pipistrellus sp</i>	Hab Regs, WCA, RBAP	20	1993-2015	0.41km south-east
Daubenton's bat <i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	Hab Regs, WCA, RBAP	25	1991-2008	0.72km north-east
Noctule <i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	Hab Regs, WCA, RBAP	3	1999-2015	0.36km south-west
Unidentified bat <i>Chiroptera sp</i>	Hab Regs, WCA, RBAP	3	1991 - 2015	0.36km south-west
Birds				
Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>	S41	1	2015	0.86km north-east
Black-headed gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>		1	2015	0.86km north-east
Swift <i>Apus apus</i>		91	1994 -	0.3km east
Peregrine falcon <i>Falco peregrinus</i>	A1, WCA	2	2012	On Site (one pair on the former Western Tower)
House martin <i>Delichon urbicum</i>		1	1991	0.9km south
Grey wagtail <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>		1	2015	0.86km north-east
Black redstart <i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	WCA, Red, RBAP	5	2005 - 2012	On Site (nest on the former Western Tower)
Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	S41, Red	3	2004 - 2015	0.28km east

Species	Category of Importance	Number of Records	Date Range of Records	Distance of closest record from the centre of the Site (km)
Song thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	S41, Red	8	1999 - 2000	0.45km north-east

Hab Regs - Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017

WCA - The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

A1 – Annex 1 of the Birds Directive

S41 – Species of Principal Importance under The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

Red – Red list criteria (Bird of Conservation Concern)

RBAP – Reading Biodiversity Action Plan

‘Extended’ Phase 1 Habitat Survey

Habitats

- 3.6. The following habitat types, described in more detail below, were identified on Site during the ‘Extended’ Phase 1 Habitat Survey:

- Buildings;
- Ephemeral/short perennial vegetation;
- Hardstanding;
- Ornamental planting and scattered trees;
- Walls/fences.

- 3.7. The habitat descriptions given below should be read in conjunction with **Figure 1** and the photographs (Plates) presented in **Appendix C**.

Buildings

- 3.8. Numerous buildings are present on Site. These comprise offices, a multi-storey car park, retail space, leisure space and sub-stations. Further details of each building are provided in **Table 8**.

Ephemeral/Short Perennial Vegetation

- 3.9. There are some small patches of sporadic ephemeral / short perennial vegetation in the north-west of the Site. This area of the Site has been subject to disturbance as a result of the demolition of the Western Tower and former bus station / Mecca Bingo hall in 2015. The ephemeral / short perennial vegetation has colonised the edges of this area where the ground appears less disturbed. Ephemeral / short perennial vegetation is also present on the roof of Telecom House (B4). Species recorded in this habitat comprise smooth sow-thistle *Sonchus oleraceus*, fescue sp. *Festuca* sp., spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, rosebay willowherb *Chamaenerion angustifolium*, ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*, butterfly bush *Buddleja davidii* and Canadian fleabane *Conyza canadensis*.

Hardstanding

- 3.10. Hardstanding is present in the temporary events space (**Plate 1**) located along the southern side of Station Hill and within the storage compound area (**Plate 2**) where Western Tower was demolished. There are also some crushed aggregate stockpiles in this location. Roads and pavements are also present within the Site.

Ornamental Planting and Scattered Trees

- 3.11. Five ornamental planting beds (**Plate 3**) are present along the western and north-western Site boundaries adjacent to Xafinity House (B1). These beds contain a variety of cultivated and introduced shrub species including Oregon grape *Mahonia aquifolium*, butterfly bush, barberry *Berberis sp*, cultivated holly *Ilex sp*, ivy *Hedera helix*, Leyland cypress *Cupressus × leylandii* and semi-mature silver birch trees *Betula pendula*.
- 3.12. A raised linear ornamental planting bed is present along the southern side of the temporary events space (**Plate 4**). It is understood that this was implemented in 2016, following the demolition of Western Tower and the former bus station/Mecca Bingo hall. Species recorded include ivy, pendulum sedge *Carex pendula*, fern *Polypodium vulgare*, spurge *Euphorbia 'Wulfenii'* together with young silver birch and field maple *Acer campestre* trees.
- 3.13. Three temporary ornamental flower beds are also located along the northern Site boundary and these contain New Zealand flax *Phormium sp*.
- 3.14. Two semi-mature river birch *Betula nigra* trees are present in tree pits at the southern Site boundary along Friar Street.

Walls / Fences

- 3.15. Hoarding fencing and a brick wall are present at various locations across the Site, defining boundaries for different uses.

Notable Adjacent Habitats

- 3.16. Building B7 is connected to B3 at its northern side. B7 has been assessed as having low potential to support roosting bats, further details are provided in **Table 8**. All other adjacent habitats are considered to be of limited ecological value given the presence of roads and buildings.

Protected, BAP and other Notable Fauna and Flora

- 3.17. As a result of the previous ecological surveys undertaken and a review of the ecological desk study, an assessment is made below on the potential of the Site to support:
- Bats;
 - Birds;
 - Flora; and
 - Invasive Plant Species.
- 3.18. The fauna descriptions provided below should be read in conjunction with **Figure 1** and the photographs (Plates) presented in **Appendix C**.

Bats

- 3.19. The data search returned records of four bat species (as well as unidentified pipistrelle species) within 1km of the Site. The closest record was of a common pipistrelle bat recorded approximately 340m away in 2009.
- 3.20. None of the previous ecological assessments listed in **Table 1** assessed the Site as having potential value to support roosting, commuting or foraging bats.
- 3.21. The current preliminary roost inspection assessed all buildings and trees on Site and adjacent for their potential to support roosting bats. This inspection identified two buildings (B3 and B7) as having **low** potential to support roosting bats, further details are provided in **Table 8** below. All other buildings and trees have been assessed as having **negligible** potential to support roosting bats.
- 3.22. The Site supports limited vegetated habitats and it is in a densely urbanised area, with associated levels of disturbance and lighting. As such it is assessed that the Site lacks suitable foraging and commuting resources for bats.

Table 8: Results of the Preliminary Roost Inspections

Potential Roosting Features	Building Photographs	Bat Roost Rating
<u>Xafinity House (B1)</u> A six/four-storey 'L-shaped' red-brick structure with ground floor parking. This building is currently occupied by a variety of commercial office uses and is a well-maintained building. No PRFs observed.		Negligible
<u>NCP Car Park (B2)</u> An eight-storey rectangular concrete structure. It provides 950 public parking spaces over 16 floors of split-level car parking space. Security lighting is present on the exterior of the building at level 3. No PRFs observed.		Negligible

Potential Roosting Features	Building Photographs	Bat Roost Rating
<u>Friars Walk Shopping Centre (B3)</u> Friars Walk Shopping Centre is a 1970s five-storey construction. One retail unit is present on the ground floor fronting Friar Street and the remainder of the building is used as a temporary leisure space i.e 'zombie experience'. The NCP Car Park extends over Garrard Street and occupies the roof level of the north-eastern portion of the shopping centre. At the north-eastern corner of B3 a section of brick wall has been removed and this has resulted in the exposure of a cavity wall measuring approximately 10cm wide by 5m high. This feature could provide a potential entry point for bats into the cavity wall (TN1, Plate 5).		Low
<u>Telecom House (B4)</u> Telecom House is a largely vacant 1960s/1970s building with retail uses at ground floor level fronting onto Friar Street and five levels of office uses above. The section of the building fronting Friar Street comprises six storeys and has a flat roof. The remainder of the building which extends north to Garrard Street comprises four storeys and has a flat roof with external roof plant units present. No PRFs observed.		Negligible
<u>Biscuit Tin Café (B5)</u> A café constructed from metal crates. No PRFs were recorded.		Negligible

Potential Roosting Features	Building Photographs	Bat Roost Rating
<u>Sub-stations (B6)</u> Two metal sub-stations recently constructed. No PRFs recorded.		Negligible
<u>(B6)</u> A two-storey brick building with a tiled pitched roof. Two brick chimney stacks protrude from the western roof pitch and wooden cladding is present on the eastern façade. The building is currently occupied by three retail units. This building is connected to B3 at its northern side. PRFs recorded include slipped/raised roof tiles.		Low

Birds

Black Redstarts

- 3.23. The data search returned five black redstart records within 1km of the Site. The closest and most recent records being from the former Western Tower in 2012.
- 3.24. As detailed in **Table 1**, previous black redstart surveys have been undertaken at the Site and wider area. A summary of the results of these surveys are provided below.
- 3.25. The 2005 black redstart survey revealed a pair of black redstarts together with dependent young on the roof of a building adjacent to the east of the Site. The roof being utilised by the species comprises a small informal 'living' roof consisting of a flat, gravel covered substrate colonised with ephemeral plant species. Updated desk-studies undertaken in 2009 and 2011 provided further records for black redstarts in the immediate vicinity of the Site from 2009, 2010 and 2011 (specifically Friar Street, Garrard Street and Merchants Place), with breeding records held for 2009 and 2010.
- 3.26. The 2012 black redstart survey revealed that the Site was found to contain a pair of black redstarts which attempted to breed twice, both times in the NCP Car Park on Garrard Street. Two nests were found; the first is thought to have been partially successful, as chicks were heard calling from it. On inspection under licence on 29th June 2012, the nest was found to contain three cold eggs, but any surviving chicks would have left the nest by then. The second nest contained four well grown feathered young at the time of the survey visit on 12th July 2012.

- 3.27. The 2014 black redstart survey revealed that the Site still provides nesting habitat for black redstarts owing to the presence of buildings. During the first of the two survey visits, two singing males were recorded, the first singing from the buildings to the south of Garrard Street and the second on buildings outside the Site to the south east of Friar Street. The male observed on Site was seen to use a number of song-perches around and just outside the Site. A female black redstart was also seen briefly on Telecom House. The second survey visit recorded a male black redstart that was seen and heard singing briefly from two song-perches to the south of Garrard Street. The other singing male located outside the Site during the first survey was not located and no females were observed. No direct evidence of nesting or breeding black redstarts was recorded during the two surveys.
- 3.28. The 2015 black redstart surveys revealed that the Site still provides nesting habitat for black redstarts owing to the presence of buildings. Although no direct evidence of nesting or breeding black redstarts were identified during the survey, a singing male was recorded on the NCP carpark.
- 3.29. In 2018, no black redstarts were heard or seen on Site or within the adjacent areas. The ephemeral / short perennial vegetation present in the north-west of the Site and on the roof of B4, although limited, could provide foraging opportunities for black redstarts.

Peregrines

- 3.30. The data search returned two peregrine falcon records within 1km of the Site. The closest and most recent records being from the former Western Tower in 2012.
- 3.31. A single male peregrine falcon was recorded on and around the Site on two occasions in 2005 (1st June and 8th June). This individual was observed to be wearing jesses and is therefore considered to be an escaped falconer's bird. As an escaped bird, it does not have the same conservation status as a wild-bred peregrine.
- 3.32. In 2012, a pair of peregrines was seen on the Western Tower on Site on several occasions during the black redstart survey visits. A search was made for a nesting scrape on the Western Tower on 29th June 2012. However, no sign of any breeding activity was found. It is therefore considered to be a perch site only.
- 3.33. A pair of peregrines was again recorded to be using the Western Tower in 2014. They were using it as a lookout and for loafing and feeding. No evidence of nesting was found during any bird surveys in 2014. In 2014, following a bird survey building inspection at the Western Tower on Site, netting was erected to deter peregrine falcons nesting on the tower prior to demolition works.
- 3.34. In 2015 a single peregrine falcon was observed flying over the Site but did not land on any buildings within the Site boundary. It is considered that the netting erected in 2014 was successful in deterring peregrine falcons from using the Western Tower for perching and so the Site was deemed suitable for foraging peregrines only.
- 3.35. The Western Tower was demolished in 2015. None of the other buildings on Site are considered to have potential to support peregrine falcon owing to their much lower heights. As such, no specific survey for peregrine falcon was undertaken in 2018.

Other Bird Species

- 3.36. The data search returned records of seven other bird species (which are known to utilise urban environments) within 1km of the Site. The closest record was of a starling recorded approximately 280m away in 2008.
- 3.37. The following bird species were recorded during the previous Site walkovers and black redstart surveys detailed in **Table 1**, both on and adjacent to the Site:
- Blackbird *Turdus merula* in 2005 and 2012;
 - Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* in 2005, 2012 and 2014;
 - Magpie *Pica pica* in 2014;
 - Jackdaw *Corvus monedula* in 2014;
 - Red kite *Milvus milvus* in 2014;
 - Wren *Troglodytes aedon* in 2014;
 - Wood pigeon *Columba palumbus* in 2005 and 2014;
 - Feral pigeon *Columba livia* in 2005, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2014 and 2015;
 - Swift *Apus apus* in 2005 and 2014;
 - Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* in 2009 and 2014;
 - Carrion crow *Corvus corone* in 2009;
 - Robin *Erithacus rubecula* in 2012 and 2014;
 - Pied wagtail *Motacilla alba* in 2012 and 2014;
 - Grey wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* in 2012 and 2014;
 - Blue tit *Cyanistes caeruleus* in 2012 and 2014;
 - House sparrow *Passer domesticus* in 2012 and 2014;
 - Black-headed gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* in 2014;
 - Herring gull *Larus argentatus* in 2012 and 2014;
 - Peregrine falcon *Falco peregrinus* in 2005, 2012, 2014 and 2015; and
 - Dunnock *Prunella modularis* in 2014.
- 3.38. In 2018, the following bird species were recorded on Site or in the immediate adjacent area:
- Black-headed gull;
 - Herring gull;
 - Lesser black-backed gull *Larus fuscus*;
 - Feral pigeon;
 - Common swift *Apus apus*;
 - Pied wagtail;
 - Dunnock;
 - Robin;

- Starling;
- Carrion crow;
- Western jackdaw; and
- European goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*.

- 3.39. Of the above recorded in 2018, a dunnoek was holding territory (singing) in the northwest corner of the Site and feral pigeon were seen to be nesting within the Site, both in the NCP Car Park and on the buildings to the south of Garrard Street. There was a small group of European goldfinch (containing juveniles) in the newly developed area of Station Hill and pied wagtails appear to be roosting (and probably breeding) within the adjacent railway station complex with at least one pair commuting between the Site and the station. Herring gull, western jackdaw and carrion crow were all seen perched within the Site but not showing any indication of having bred on the Site. All other species listed above were seen either overflying the Site or outside the Site.
- 3.40. Two species (herring gull and starling), which are on the red list of birds of conservation concern and are listed as SoPI were recorded in 2018. They are not thought to have bred on-Site, and given these species are still common and widespread in the region, the Site is not considered to be of particular importance to them.
- 3.41. Four species; lesser black-backed gull, common swift, black-headed gull and dunnoek (SoPI) were recorded in 2018. None of these species are thought to have bred on Site, although as detailed above dunnoek was holding territory.
- 3.42. All other species recorded in 2018 are not of special conservation concern.

Flora

- 3.43. No notable or protected flora or fauna species were recorded on Site.

Invasive Plant Species

- 3.44. No commonly known invasive plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the WCA were recorded at the Site during the 'Extended' Phase 1 Habitat Survey.

Other Protected and Notable Faunal and Flora Species

- 3.45. No evidence of any other protected and notable species faunal species was recorded on Site at the time of survey and overall, given the type and extent of habitats present, it is considered unlikely that any such species would be present on Site.

4. Assessment

- 4.1. The potential IEFs that are anticipated to be affected by the Development (based on the results of the PEA and the Development plans received to date) are listed in **Table 9** below. This table details the rationale for the inclusion of each potential IEF and also details the potential effect pathways and any requirement for further ecological assessments.

Table 9: Potential Important Ecological Features Anticipated to be Affected by the Development

Potential Important Ecological Feature	Category of Importance	Rationale	Potential Effect Pathway	Requirement for Further Ecological Assessment
Black Redstart	WCA, Red RBAP	Historical use (breeding and holding territory) of the Site. Potential breeding habitats still exist on Site.	Disturbance and injury and killing of the species. Destruction and damage to active nests.	Pre-demolition survey if works are undertaken during the breeding season (March – August inclusive). Further details provided in Section 5.
Roosting bats	Hab Regs, WCA, S41, RBAP	B3 and B7 are assessed to have low potential to support roosting bats.	Destruction / disturbance of bat roosts. Killing or injury of bats present in the roosts during building demolition.	Yes - Further assessment in the form of evening emergence / re-entry surveys.

- 4.2. All other ecological features identified through the PEA have been scoped out of further assessment because the population or area likely to be affected by the Development is of insufficient size or diversity to be of ecological value, no potential effect pathway between the Development and these features has been identified; and/or contravention of the legislation relating to the feature is unlikely to occur. The rationale for scoping out features is provided in **Table 10** below.

Table 10: Ecological Features Scoped out of the Assessment

Ecological Feature	Rational
Designated Sites	No pathway of direct or indirect effect given distance from Site. No significant effects anticipated from the Development.
On Site and adjacent habitats (all)	Habitat types are both nationally and locally common. No significant effects anticipated from the Development.
Roosting bats	Buildings B1, B2, B4, B5, B6 and all trees on Site have been assessed as having negligible potential to support roosting bats and therefore no significant effects are anticipated from the Development.
Foraging & commuting bats	The Site itself is considered to provide very limited opportunities for foraging and commuting bats. No significant effects anticipated from the Development.

Ecological Feature	Rational
Peregrine Falcon	None of the buildings on Site are considered suitable to support peregrine falcon. No significant effects anticipated from the Development.
Other Bird Species	Based on survey results usage of the Site is likely to be limited to small numbers (except feral pigeon) of urban bird species only. No significant effects anticipated from the Development.

5. Ecological Constraints and Opportunities

- 5.1. The PEA has identified two potential IEFs, namely roosting bats and black redstarts, which have the potential to be affected by the Development and result in significant ecological effects. The requirement for further ecological assessments to fully define the presence of roosting bats has been highlighted within **Table 9** and a detailed scope is provided below.
- 5.2. To minimise or avoid any significant ecological effects of the Development ecological mitigation have been provided in this section for the potential IEFs and other ecological features. Further details in relation to bats has been provided in a separate bat report.
- 5.3. To inform the future scheme design process for future planning applications recommendations for future ecological compensation and enhancement measures have also been provide in this section. These measures will need to be finalised upon scheme fix and based upon the results of the additional bat assessments.

Designated Sites

- 5.4. Three LWSs lie within 1km of the Site as detailed in **Table 6**. The built development and roads separate the Site from these LWSs. The proposed Development is unlikely to impact upon these LWSs due to the nature of the existing and proposed end use and that the proposals comprise redevelopment of an existing developed site. In addition, public access is encouraged to LWSs and the redevelopment of the Site is unlikely to increase the public use of this area significantly. As such, it is considered that the proposed Development would not have any adverse ecological impact on any LWSs and are therefore are not assessed to be an IEF. However, as a matter of best practice and in accordance with Outline Planning Condition 35, it is recommended that an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) (see below for further details) be implemented during the demolition and construction phase of the Development.

Habitats

- 5.5. No habitats present within the Site are assessed to be IEFs. Nevertheless, mitigation in the form of appropriate protection measures would be set out within the EMP during the construction phase of the Development in accordance with Outline Planning Condition 35. Measures to be included within the EMP should comprise:
 - In line with local planning policy CS38, those trees which will be retained within the Development should be protected in accordance with local planning policy SG18, the existing retained trees should be protected during the construction phase of the Development in accordance with BS 5837:2012 - "*Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations*"¹⁹;
 - The use of British Standards Best Practice Guidelines to reduce disturbance resulting from noise, surface run-off and vibration during construction works;
 - Careful siting and appropriate bunding of storage facilities for fuel and hazardous materials;
 - Delivery of oils and fuels to be supervised at all times;
 - Dust build up and mud deposits should be avoided and stockpiled material to be covered or stored within a contained area to enable run-off to be treated; and
 - Use of trip trays when filling smaller containers from tanks or drums to avoid spillage entering the ground or drainage systems.

¹⁹ BSI (2012): *BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations*.

- 5.6. In line with local planning policy CS36 and Outline Planning Condition 22, it is recommended that the future scheme designs provide the following ecological enhancement measures. The following measures should be considered:
- It is recommended that trees on Site are retained where possible, and placed under a suitable management regime, as part of any future Development proposals;
 - The use of native species or species of benefit to wildlife within any proposed landscape scheme to provide foraging opportunities for birds, bats, invertebrates and other fauna is recommended to enhance the Site for wildlife;
 - The provision of a variety of habitats to provide floristic diversity e.g lawns, hedgerows, shrub planting and herbaceous planting;
 - Additional habitat could be created above ground level utilising roof top space to provide suitable foraging opportunities for local fauna such as bats, bird and invertebrates. Brown roofs should be provided with a gravel substrate and allowed to self-seed with ruderal/ephemeral species. Green roofs could also be provided by creating grassland on roofs by sowing sedum and hardy plant species in shallow low-nutrient soils. Such habitats would provide a food source for invertebrates on which birds and bats may feed. They are also ideal for incorporating bat/bird boxes; and
 - Artificial habitats for bats and birds (see fauna section below) to enhance the Site for these species group.

Protected and Notable Fauna

Bats

- 5.7. Buildings B3 and B7 have been assessed as having **low** potential to support roosting bats. It is understood that B3 will be demolished as part of the Development (specifically Plot F) and B7, which adjoins B3, could also be disturbed as a result of the proposed demolition works. In line with best practice guidelines, it is recommended these buildings are subject to a single evening emergence or pre-dawn re-entry survey to determine the presence / likely absence of roosting bats. Evening emergence / pre-dawn re-entry surveys should be undertaken during the optimal time for this type of survey (May – August). If bats are found roosting within any of these buildings, survey effort would need to be increased to gain an understanding of the bat roost present, and to provide enough information for a NE European Protected Species (EPS) Development Licence application. Please note that a NE licence application takes at least 30 working days to process and must be supported by bat survey information within 18-24 months of age. If roosting bats are discovered, appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures would need to be provided within the Development.
- 5.8. The results of the recommended bat surveys are provided in a separate bat survey report for Plot F.
- 5.9. All other buildings and trees on Site have been identified as having negligible potential to support roosting bats. As such, no further assessment of these buildings and trees is required.
- 5.10. In line with Outline Planning Condition 30, if a significant period of time elapses (normally considered by most local planning authorities as being over 2 years) between this report being produced and the proposed Development works being undertaken, the buildings and trees may deteriorate in

condition and should be subject to an update survey to determine if their potential to support roosting bats has changed.

- 5.11. In line with local planning policy CS36, it is recommended that the future scheme designs provide bat boxes to enhance opportunities on Site for roosting bats. The bat boxes should be erected at least 4m above ground level facing south, south-east or south-west. The exact details of the enhancement measures would be finalised upon completion of the recommended bat surveys.
- 5.12. The use of native plant species as recommended above, would provide additional foraging and commuting habitat for bats at the Site.
- 5.13. In addition, a wildlife sensitive lighting strategy should look to be adopted across the Site to prevent any unnecessary spill on future roosting habitats (e.g. bat boxes) and commuting/foraging habitats.

Birds

Black Redstarts

- 5.14. Although no black redstarts were observed on Site in 2018, given the previous survey and desk study results, it is considered likely that black redstarts could still breed on or immediately adjacent to the Site.
- 5.15. In line with Outline Planning Condition 31 and to ensure legal compliance for the Development, demolition and Site clearance works should be undertaken outside the main breeding bird season where practicable (mid-September to mid-February inclusive). If these works cannot be restricted to this period, a pre-demolition/clearance check should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist to ensure that nesting black redstarts are not adversely affected. If nesting black redstarts are recorded during the pre-demolition/clearance check, an appropriate method statement would be agreed in consultation with RBC. This would include measures to prevent the disturbance to breeding black redstarts, including cessation of demolition, site clearance or construction works in areas close to breeding sites until the birds have completed breeding, and monitoring the species during the active construction period.
- 5.16. In line with Outline Planning Condition 22, it is recommended that the future scheme designs provide artificial nesting opportunities (e.g. Schwegler 2HW Nest Box) for black redstarts. It is recommended that the nest boxes are erected at least 4m above ground level on buildings facing a north-east or east direction. The nest box should be located away from areas of disturbance and ideally close to potential foraging resources (e.g. brown roofs).
- 5.17. As discussed in the habitats section above, the provision of brown roofs within the Development would provide foraging habitats for black redstarts.

Peregrine Falcon

- 5.18. Given the demolition of Western Tower, there are no current opportunities on Site for peregrine falcon and as such, no specific mitigation measures for this species are required as part of the Development.
- 5.19. In line with Outline Planning Condition 22, it is recommended that artificial nesting opportunities for peregrine falcons should be provided within the Development on buildings of suitable height, taking

the former Western Tower as a benchmark at c.15 storeys. It is recommended that open fronted peregrine falcon nest boxes filled with suitable substrate for egg-laying are erected at a high elevation on the edge of the roof tops of new buildings. The nest box should be located away from areas of disturbance and have a clear flight path. Alternatively, a specially designed high elevation ledge or recess could be included within the design of proposed new buildings to provide a safe perching or nesting platform. Any artificial nest site should be sited facing north-east or east to prevent possible overheating of the eggs and newly hatched young²⁰.

Other Bird Species

- 5.20. As detailed above for black redstart, demolition and Site clearance works should be undertaken outside the main breeding bird season where practicable (mid-September to mid-February inclusive) in line with Outline Planning Condition 31 (note: feral pigeon recommendation below) and to ensure legal compliance for the Development.
- 5.21. Given the presence of nesting feral pigeons within buildings on Site it is recommended that a staged approach to legally remove the pigeons is carried out prior to demolition. The breeding season for most common bird species is documented to be between March to August inclusive, however feral pigeons are known to breed all year round and receive legal protection (**Appendix B**) when at an active nest site. As such it is recommended that a contractor is appointed to develop a strategy to clear the Site of feral pigeons that could include the use anti-nesting devices, to discourage birds from nesting on the buildings. Once nests are no longer active the contractor may wish to install netting to prevent birds from returning. These are critical to prevent any delays to the proposed demolition commencement date on Site.
- 5.22. In line with Outline Planning Condition 22, it is recommended that the future scheme designs provide artificial nesting opportunities for swifts (e.g lbstock eco-habitat for swifts). It is recommended that the nest boxes are erected at a high elevation on buildings facing a north direction. The nest bricks should be incorporated into a wall (cladding) with clear adjacent airspace for the swifts to fly into.
- 5.23. The use of native plant species as recommended above, would provide additional foraging and nesting habitat for birds at the Site.

²⁰ Ratcliffe, D A (1995) *The Peregrine Falcon*. Second Edition. T and A D Poyser, London.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1. As a result of the PEA, ecological features within the ZOI including designated Sites, habitats, foraging and commuting bats, peregrine falcon and other bird species have been scoped out of the assessment due to insufficient biodiversity conservation value or a lack of an identified pathway for potential effects to occur. However, roosting bats and black redstarts are potential IEFs within the ZOI which are anticipated to be affected by the Development.
- 6.2. It is determined that further ecological assessments as detailed in **Table 11** below would be required to inform the Development's emerging scheme design.

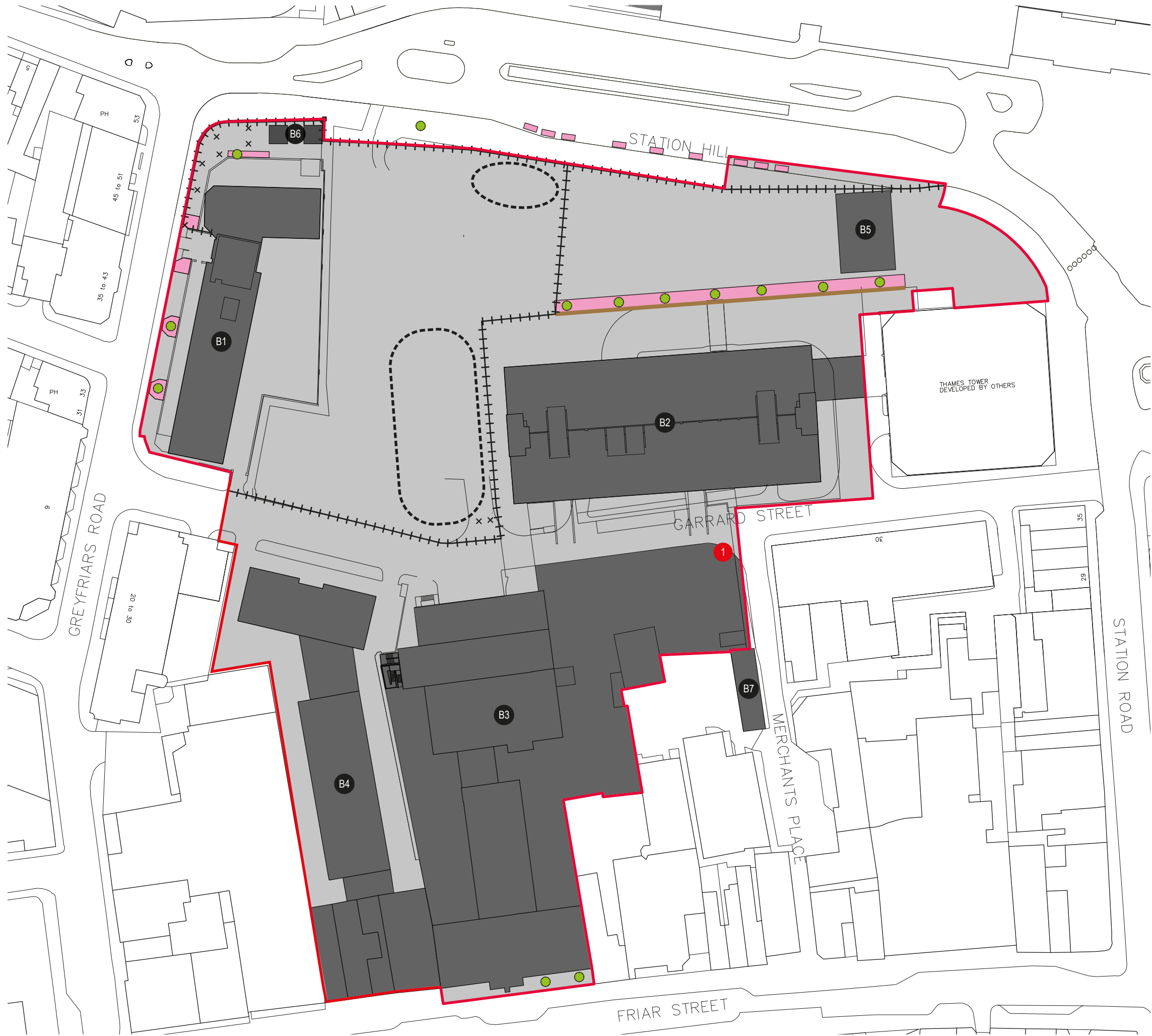
Table 11: Summary of Additional Ecological Assessments

Species	Survey	Timing
Roosting bats	A single evening emergence or pre-dawn re-entry survey at B3 and B7.	May to August

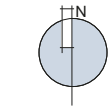
- 6.3. Recommendations have been made within this report to ensure legal compliance and ensure good practice measures are adopted during the Development works. Furthermore, recommendations for ecological compensation and enhancement have been provided to inform the future scheme design process for future planning applications.
- 6.4. It should be noted that this PEA is relevant to the legislation detailed in Section 2 and **Appendix B** at the time of writing. If there are any changes to legislation prior to the Development being completed, the advice within this PEA may require amending / updating in line with any legislative updates.
- 6.5. If there is a significant period of time (most LPAs consider this period to be to 24 months) between this PEA and the Development commencing, the ecological value of the Site may change and the Site should therefore be subject to an update survey.

Figures

Figure 1: 'Extended' Phase 1 Habitat Survey Plan (ref. WIE14788-100_GR_PEA_1A)



- Site Boundary
- Buildings
- Hardstanding
- Tree
- Ornamental Planting
- Ephemeral / Short Perennial
- Wall
- Aggregate Stockpiles
- Fence
- Target Note



Project Details	WIE14788-100: Station Hill, Reading
Figure Title	Figure 1: 'Extended' Phase 1 Habitat Survey Plan
Figure Ref	WIE14788-100_GR_PEA_1A
Date	August 2018
File Location	\\s-incs\wiel\projects\wie14788\100\graphics\peal\issued figures



APPENDICES

A. Summary of Outline Planning Conditions

Planning Condition	Relevant to which Phase / Plot	Comments
Condition 22: <i>"In respect of each Plot, each application for the approval of Reserved Matters shall be accompanied by details of habitat mitigation works for that Plot (if and to the extent relevant to the subject matter of the Reserved Matters application). This shall include a report detailing the following habitat mitigation works which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:</i> <i>A. Locations and specification for bird nesting habitats for Black Redstarts, Swifts and Peregrine Falcons</i> <i>B. Specifications for green roofs and brown roofs (to be a minimum area of 25% of each Plot's roof area in the development), including their method of construction and landscaping on-going management for five years; and</i> <i>C. Details of the ground level planting scheme (demonstrating how it has been designed to maximise its benefit to wildlife within the context of the scheme).</i> <i>These approved habitat mitigation works shall be in place prior to completion of the relevant building/Plot and retained thereafter.</i> <i>Reason: to ensure that a habitat which would be designed specifically for these birds is created/re-provided for within the development, in the interests of biodiversity."</i>	All	Condition 22 was discharged for Plot B on 17.10.16 (ref. 151545); and Condition 22 is duplicated on the Plot E / Telecom House consent (151426) and is yet to be discharged.
Condition 30: <i>"In the event that demolition of a relevant Plot has not commenced by 1 June 2015, no development/demolition shall commence until an updated bat survey has been undertaken (by an appropriately qualified ecologist, that is a member of CIEEM or an equivalent institution with experience of undertaking bat surveys,) and the results submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Furthermore, should bats or evidence of bats be found, no development shall commence until any relevant licence(s) have been obtained from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (currently Natural England) and a copy is submitted to the Local Planning Authority. Should bats or evidence of bats be found and the applicant considers that a licence for development works affecting bat is not required, the applicant must submit a report to the Local Planning Authority detailing the reasons for this assessment and this report is to be approved in writing before development shall commence.</i> <i>Reason: to ensure that bats, a material consideration, are not adversely affected by the development."</i>	All	N/A
Condition 31: <i>"No demolition or site clearance within a plot shall take place within the bird nesting season (mid-February to mid-September inclusive). If clearance within a Plot during the bird-breeding season cannot reasonably be avoided, a suitably qualified ecologist will resurvey the areas within and adjacent to the Plot immediately prior to clearance within</i>	All	Condition 31 is duplicated on the Plot E / Telecom House consent (151426) and

Planning Condition	Relevant to which Phase / Plot	Comments
<i>the Plot and advise whether nesting birds are present. If active nests are recorded, no works that could disturb the nest shall proceed until all young have fledged the nest and if a nest of a Peregrine Falcon, Swift or Black Redstart is found on a Plot, all works of demolition within a Plot or site clearance within a Pot which could disturb the nest must cease until a method statement for undertaking the works on the Plot has been agreed with the Local Planning Authority. The works shall only be undertaken in accordance with the approved method statement, save to the extent that the Local Planning Authority approves any variation.</i> <i>Reason: to minimise the impact of the development on bird species."</i>		is yet to be discharged.
Condition 35: <i>"No development shall commence (including works of demolition) on any Plot until an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) (based on the recommendations in Chapter 6: Development Programme Demolition and Construction of the document, "Environmental Statement Volume 1", dated March 2013 by Waterman Group) for that Plot has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The demolition and construction within the Plot shall thereafter only be undertaken in accordance with the approved EMP (which shall include noise control, hours of construction and controlling exposure to contaminated land), save to the extent that the Local Planning Authority approves any variation to the approved details.</i> <i>Reason: to ensure that the redevelopment of each Plot is undertaken in a way which minimises disturbance to residents and occupiers of other Plots within the development and surrounding existing residential and commercial land uses."</i>	All	Condition 35 was discharged 19.03.2015 (ref. 150119); and Condition 35 is duplicated on the Plot E / Telecom House consent (151426) and is yet to be discharged.

B. Planning Policy and Summarised Flora and Fauna Legislation

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework, 2018

- B1. The National Planning Policy Framework²¹ (NPPF) was published in July 2018. Section 15 (outlined below) of the NPPF, 'Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment', replaces Section 11 of the previous NPPF 2012 revision²². However, Government Circular 06/2005²³ - Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: Statutory Obligations and Their Impact within the Planning System, remains valid and is referenced within the NPPF.
- B2. The NPPF encourages the planning system to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. This should be achieved by:
- *"Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
 - *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
 - *maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
 - *minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
 - *preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
 - *Remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate".*
- B3. The NPPF also stipulates that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), when determining planning applications, should apply the following principles:
- *"If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;*
 - *development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;*

²¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. (2018). *National Planning Policy Framework*.

²² Department of Communities and Local Government. (2012). *National Planning Policy Framework*.

²³ Department of Communities and Local Government. (2005). *Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System*.

- *development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and*
- *development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.”*

National Planning Practice Guidance, 2016

- B4. The Government's National Planning Practice Guidance²⁴ (NPPG) is intended to provide guidance to local planning authorities and developers on the implementation of the planning policies set out within the NPPF. The guidance of most relevance to ecology and biodiversity is the Natural Environment Chapter, which explains key issues in implementing policy to protect biodiversity, including local requirements.

Local Planning Policy

Reading Borough Local Development Framework: Core Strategy

- B5. The Core Strategy²⁵ was adopted (with alterations) by Reading Borough Council on 27th January 2015. The Core Strategy is the main document in the Council's Local Development Framework (LDF). It sets out how planning and development will achieve the Reading 2020 Vision for the town. It provides a framework for how Reading can grow in a sustainable way in the future. The following policies are of relevance to the Site:
- Policy CS36 'Biodiversity and Geology' states:
 - “a) Development should retain, protect and incorporate features of biodiversity or geological interest (including protected species and their habitats) found within the application site into their schemes. On sites with recognised biodiversity or geological value, development will not be permitted where there would be a direct or indirect adverse impact on the site, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that: -*
 - i. The need for development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site; and*
 - ii. Appropriate compensation, impact minimisation, mitigation and compensation are provided.*
 - b) Local Nature Reserves and Wildlife Heritage Sites will be safeguarded and where possible, enhanced. Permission will not be granted for any development that would adversely affect a designated nature reserve or Wildlife Heritage Site.*
 - c) Any development that would sever or threaten the integrity of an established wildlife link, as indicated on an adopted proposals map, will not be permitted. Where applicable, developments should be designed to protect, consolidate, extend and enhance the network of wildlife links and corridors in and adjoining the Borough, working with neighbouring authorities where appropriate.”*
 - Policy CS38 'Trees, Hedges and Woodlands' states:

²⁴ Department for Communities and Local Government. (2016). *National Planning Practice Guidance*. DCLG, London.

²⁵ Reading Borough Council (January 2015). *Reading Borough Local Development Framework: Core Strategy*.

“Individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal, and the Borough’s vegetation cover will be extended.”

Reading Borough Local Development Framework, Sites and Detailed Policies Document, Adopted 2012 (Updated 2015)

- B6. Policy DM3 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document²⁶ relates to infrastructure Planning. The policy states that in determining planning applications the highest priority will be given to *“open space, green infrastructure and other measures to improve or enhance biodiversity”*.
- B7. Policy DM18 encourages tree planting within application sites or off-site where appropriate.

Reading Borough Local Development Framework, Reading Central Area Action Plan, 2009

- B8. The Reading Central Area Action Plan (RCAAP) adopted in 2009²⁷, stresses that the design and construction of new developments in the centre of Reading should be sustainable in nature. The Plan draws attention to the use of green and brown roofs which *“may enhance the biodiversity value of developments in the centre. Brown roofs in particular are of benefit to species such as black redstarts, one of the priority species in the [Reading] Biodiversity Action Plan, which have been sighted in the central area”*.

Station Hill South Planning and Urban Design Brief, 2007

- B9. The Station Hill Planning and Urban Design Brief²⁸ acknowledges that the ecology of the area is mainly limited to black redstarts, which are known to nest in the area. Design principle 8 states:
- *“Developments should demonstrate positive yield in terms of environmental and ecological benefits...”*;
 - *“Development should meet the requirements of the local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)”*; and
 - *“Building tall buildings can also yield potential ecological and environmental benefits by integrating vertical landscaping, roof gardens or vegetation within the architecture. Further consideration will be expected as part of any application for taller buildings.”*

Reading Borough Council: Tree Strategy for Reading

- B10. The Tree Strategy for Reading²⁹ sets out a shared vision and strategy for trees in Reading. It considers various issues and options in relation to trees and sets out a strategic approach towards future management. The following objectives are of relevance to this report:

- B11. Objective 5: Enhancing biodiversity states:

“The Council will seek to ensure that the management of its tree stock and woodlands is enhanced by:

- *Protecting trees and woodlands, particularly ancient or veteran trees and important woodlands;*
- *Writing and implementing woodland management plans;*
- *Conserving, enhancing and extending existing green corridors and creating new ones to enhance the borough’s green infrastructure;*

²⁶ Reading Borough Council (2012). *Reading Borough Local Development Framework, Sites and Detailed Policies Document, Adopted 2012*

²⁷ Reading Borough Council (2009). *Reading Borough Local Development Framework: Reading Central Area Action Plan To 2026*.

²⁸ Reading Borough Council (2007). *Station Hill South Planning and Urban Design Brief*.

²⁹ Reading Borough Council (June 2010). *Tree Strategy for Reading*.

- Ensuring that native and wildlife friendly species of trees are used in new planting schemes in most cases; and
- Retaining standing and fallen dead wood habitat for biodiversity where health and safety and amenity considerations allow.”

B12. Objective 6: The role of new developments states:

“New development will be expected to make a positive and sustainable contribution supporting the objectives of this strategy in enhancing Reading’s urban environment. Such planting should be used to enhance streets and other public realm as part of planning permissions for all relevant new developments, particularly in higher density urban developments.”

Reading Local Plan 2018

B13. Reading Borough Council are currently producing a new Local Plan³⁰, which once adopted will replace the existing development plans detailed above. The new Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on Thursday 29th March 2018. The following policies relate to the Site and/or biodiversity and nature conservation:

- EN12: Biodiversity and The Green Network; and
- CR11: Station / River Major Opportunity Area
 - CR11a: Friar Street & Station Road;
 - CR11b: Greyfriars Road Corner;
 - CR11c: Station Hill & Friars Walk.

Biodiversity Action Plans

UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework

B14. The Environment Departments of all four governments in the UK work together through the Four Countries Biodiversity Group. Together they have agreed, and Ministers have signed, a framework of priorities for UK-level work for the Convention on Biological Diversity. Published on 17 July 2012, the 'UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework'³¹ covers the period from 2011 to 2020. This now supersedes the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP)³². However, many of the tools developed under UK BAP remain of use, for example, background information about the lists of priority habitats and species. The lists of priority species and habitats agreed under UK BAP still form the basis of much biodiversity work in the countries.

B15. Although the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework does not confer any statutory legal protection, in practice many of the species listed already receive statutory legal protection under UK and / or European legislation. In addition, the majority of Priority national (English) BAP habitats and species are now those listed as Habitats of Principal Importance (HoPI) and Species of Principal Importance (SoPI) in England listed under Section 41 (S41) of the NERC Act 2006. For the purpose of this report, habitats and species listed under S41 of the NERC Act are referred to as having superseded the UK BAP. All public bodies have a legal obligation or 'biodiversity duty' under Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 to conserve biodiversity by having particular regard to those species and habitats listed under S41.

³⁰ Reading Borough Council (2018) *Submission Draft: Reading Borough Local Plan*.

³¹ JNCC and DEFRA (on behalf of the Four Countries' Biodiversity Group). (2012). *UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework*.

³² HMSO. (1994) *Biodiversity The UK Action Plan*.

Appendices

Station Hill, Reading

WIE14788-100

WIE14788-100-R-1-2-1-PEA

B16. Based on the results of the PEA no HoPIs are considered present on or adjacent to the Site. However, the following SoPIs listed under S41 are considered to be of potential value on and/or immediately adjacent to the Site:

- Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*;
- Noctule *Nyctalus noctule*;
- Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*;
- Herring gull *Larus argentatus*; and
- Dunnock *Prunella modularis*.

Berkshire Biodiversity Strategy

B17. The Berkshire Biodiversity Strategy³³ presents a statement of the current state of nature in Berkshire and a strategy for protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

Local Biodiversity Action Plan

B18. At a local level, the Site is covered by The Reading Biodiversity Action Plan (RBAP)³⁴. The RBAP sets out a methodology to protect, conserve and enhance Reading's diversity of wildlife. Based on the results of the PEA, the following Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) and Species Action Plans (SAPs) listed on the RBAP are considered to be of potential value on and/or immediately adjacent to the Site:

- Urban I (Manmade site and structures);
- Black redstart *Phoenicurus ochrurus*; and
- Bats.

Guidance

Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services

B19. In October 2010, over 190 countries signed an historic global agreement in Nagoya, Japan to take urgent and effective action to halt the alarming global declines in biodiversity. This agreement recognised just how important it is to look after the natural world. It established a new global vision for biodiversity, including a set of strategic goals and targets to drive action. England's response to this agreement was the publication of '*Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services*'³⁵. The mission for this strategy is:

"to halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people."

BS 42020: 2013 Biodiversity: Code of Practice for Planning and Development

B20. The UK commitment to halt overall loss of biodiversity by 2020 in line with the European Biodiversity Strategy and UN Aichi targets³⁶, is passed down to local authorities to implement, mainly through

³³ Berkshire Local Nature Partnership (2014) *The Natural Environment in Berkshire: Biodiversity Strategy 2014-2020*.

³⁴ The Reading Biodiversity Action Plan. http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/5972/Reading-Biodiversity-Action-Plan/pdf/Reading_BAP_February_062.pdf Access in July 2018.

³⁵ Defra. (2011) *Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services*.

³⁶ <https://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/>

planning policy. To assist organizations affected by these commitments, BSI has published BS 42020 which offers a coherent methodology for biodiversity management.

- B21. This British Standard sets out to assist those concerned with ecological issues as they arise through the planning process in matters relating to permitted development and activities involved in the management of land outside the scope of land use planning, which could have site-specific ecological implications.
- B22. The standard has been produced with input from a number of organisations including the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and the Association of Local Government Ecologists (ALGE) and provides:
- Guidance on how to produce clear and concise ecological information to accompany planning applications;
 - recommendations on professional ethics, conduct, competence and judgement to give confidence that proposals for biodiversity conservation, and consequent decisions/actions taken, are sound and appropriate; and
 - direction on effective decision-making in biodiversity management a framework to demonstrate how biodiversity has been managed during the development process to minimize impact.

Legislation

- B23. Specific habitats and species receive legal protection in England under various pieces of legislation, including:
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017³⁷;
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)³⁸;
 - The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000³⁹; and
 - The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006⁴⁰.
- B24. Further details of legislation in respect of legally protected and notable flora and fauna of relevance to the Site are provided below;

Bats

- B25. In summary, in England all UK bat species are protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and by the WCA 1981 (as amended). Taken together it is an offence to deliberately, intentionally or recklessly:
- Kill, injure or capture a bat;
 - Disturb bats in such a way as to be likely significant to affect:
 - (i) the ability of any significant group of bats to survive, breed, or rear / nurture their young; or
 - (ii) the local distribution of that species;
 - Damage or destroy any breeding or resting place used by bats; or
 - Obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter or protection and disturbing bats while occupying such as place.

³⁷ HMSO (2010) The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

³⁸ HMSO (1981) 'Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)'

³⁹ HMSO (2000) 'The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act'

⁴⁰ ODPM (2006) 'Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)'

Birds

B26. All breeding birds are protected under current UK legislation through the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, entitled 'Protection of Wild Birds, their Nests and Eggs', confirms the following:

B27. Subject to the provisions of this Part, if any person intentionally:

- kills, injures or takes any wild bird;
- takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or
- takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird, he shall be guilty of an offence.

B28. Black redstarts are afforded National protection under Schedule 1 of the WCA 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally take, injure or kill a black redstart or to take damage or destroy its nest, eggs or young. It is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb the birds close to their nest during the breeding season.

C. Photographs



Plate 1 – Temporary events space along the southern side of Station Hill comprising hardstanding, ornamental planting, scattered trees, The Biscuit Tin Café (B5) and a pop-up event venue.



Plate 2 – Compound area located between Garrard Street and Station Hill with crushed aggregate stockpiles where Western Tower was previously demolished.



Plate 3 – Ornamental planting along the western Site boundary adjacent to Xafinity House (B1)

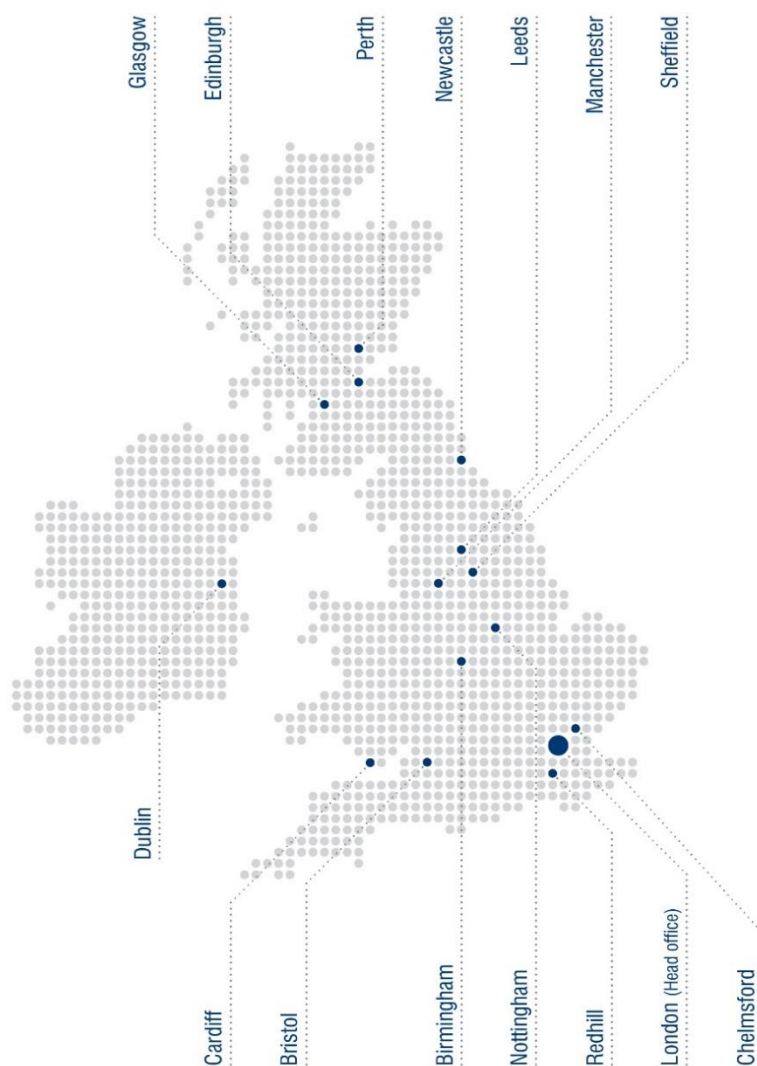


Plate 4 - Linear raised ornamental planting bed located along the southern extent of the temporary events space.



Plate 5 - At the north-eastern corner of B3 a section of brick wall has been removed and this has resulted in the exposure of a cavity wall measuring approximately 10cm wide by 5m high (located denoted by red arrow above). This feature could provide a potential entry point for bats to roost in the cavity wall **(TN1)**.

UK and Ireland Office Locations





Station Hill, Reading

Bat Survey Report

September 2018

Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Limited

Merchants House, Wapping Road, Bristol, BS1 4RW.

www.watermangroup.com

Client Name: SH Reading Master LLP
Document Reference: WIE14788-100-R-2-2-1-BAT
Project Number: WIE14788-100

Quality Assurance – Approval Status

This document has been prepared and checked in accordance with
Waterman Group's IMS (BS EN ISO 9001: 2015, BS EN ISO 14001: 2015 and BS OHSAS 18001:2007)

Issue	Date	Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by
Draft	August 2018	Hayley Hockridge Principal Ecologist 	Lee Mantle Associate Director 	Ben Steele Regional Director 
Final	September 2018	Hayley Hockridge Principal Ecologist 	Ben Steele Regional Director 	Ben Steele Regional Director 

Comments

Disclaimer

This report has been prepared by Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Limited, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client, incorporation of our General Terms and Condition of Business and taking account of the resources devoted to us by agreement with the client.

We disclaim any responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of the above.

This report is confidential to the client and we accept no responsibility of whatsoever nature to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at its own risk.

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Relevant Legislation and Planning Policy	2
3. Methodology	7
4. Results	8
5. Conclusions and Recommendations	9

Tables

Table 1: Summary of Evening Emergence Bat Survey	7
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Figures

Figure 1: 'Extended' Phase 1 Habitat Survey Plan (WIE14788-100_GR_PEA_1A)	10
Figure 2: Bat Surveyor Locations (WIE14788-100_GR_EC_1A)	10

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Ltd (Waterman IE) was commissioned by SH Reading Master LLP (hereafter referred to as the 'Applicant') to carry out a bat survey at an area of land known as Station Hill, which encompasses Plots A - G, located in Reading Town Centre (hereafter referred to as the 'Site'). The bat survey however was specific to a building within Plot F (B3) and a building (B7) adjacent to the south of this plot.

The Site

- 1.2. The Site is approximately 2.53 hectares (ha) in area and is centred on Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SU 71351 73699.
- 1.3. The recent Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) (report ref: WIE14788-100-R-1-2-1-PEA) identified the following habitats on Site: buildings (B1 – B6), hardstanding, ephemeral / short perennial, ornamental planting, scattered trees and walls/fences (**Figure 1**).
- 1.4. The Site is bound by roads/built development on all sides, notably Station Hill to the north, Thames Tower and Merchants Place to the east, Friar Street to the south and Greyfriars Road and built retail/office/residential development (Sainsburys, Central Studios and Greyfriars House) to the west.

Development Proposals

- 1.5. The planning history of the Site and Development proposals are summarised in the recent PEA report, however, this report has been prepared specifically in support of a prior notification of demolition submission by the Applicant in relation to Friars Walk Shopping Centre (B3) and Telecom House (B4) (hereafter referred to as the 'Development') which occupy Plot F and Plot E of the overall Development.

Aims and Objectives of this Assessment

- 1.6. The recent PEA identified B3 and B7 as having low potential to support roosting bats. B3 will be demolished as part of the Development and therefore a further bat survey was recommended in the PEA to determine the presence / likely absence of roosting bats in this building. Although building B7 will not be demolished as part of the Development, it is considered that it could be disturbed due to the proposed demolition works at the attached B3, and therefore a further bat survey was also undertaken at this building.
- 1.7. The findings of the bat surveys are presented in this report, together with mitigation and enhancement measures where required, in line with current planning policy and legislative requirements (**Appendix A**).

2. Relevant Legislation and Planning Policy

Legislation

Bats

- 2.1. All bat species in England are protected by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017¹ and by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)². Taken together, it is an offence to:
- Deliberately kill, injure or capture a bat;
 - Deliberately disturb bats in such a way as to be likely to significantly affect:
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- 2.2. The National Planning Policy Framework³ (NPPF) was published in July 2018. Section 15 (outlined below) of the NPPF, 'Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment', replaces Section 11 of the previous NPPF 2012 revision⁴. However, Government Circular 06/2005⁵ - Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: Statutory Obligations and Their Impact within the Planning System, remains valid and is referenced within the NPPF.
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¹ HMSO, 2017 'The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations'

² HMSO, 1981 'The Wildlife and Countryside Act' (WCA) (as amended)

³ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. (2018). *National Planning Policy Framework*.

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Guidance

Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services

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BS 42020: 2013 Biodiversity: Code of Practice for Planning and Development

- 2.15. The UK commitment to halt overall loss of biodiversity by 2020 in line with the European Biodiversity Strategy and UN Aichi targets¹⁴, is passed down to local authorities to implement, mainly through planning policy. To assist organizations affected by these commitments, BSI has published BS 42020 which offers a coherent methodology for biodiversity management.
- 2.16. This British Standard sets out to assist those concerned with ecological issues as they arise through the planning process in matters relating to permitted development and activities involved in the management of land outside the scope of land use planning, which could have site-specific ecological implications.
- 2.17. The standard has been produced with input from a number of organisations including the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and the Association of Local Government Ecologists (ALGE) and provides:
- Guidance on how to produce clear and concise ecological information to accompany planning applications;
 - recommendations on professional ethics, conduct, competence and judgement to give confidence that proposals for biodiversity conservation, and consequent decisions/actions taken, are sound and appropriate; and
 - direction on effective decision-making in biodiversity management a framework to demonstrate how biodiversity has been managed during the development process to minimize impact.

¹³ Defra. (2011) *Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services*.

¹⁴ <https://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/>

3. Methodology

- 3.1. To confirm the presence or absence of roosting bats within B3 and B7, an evening emergence bat survey was undertaken based on current best practice guidelines¹⁵.
- 3.2. Three bat surveyors were used during the surveys to ensure all of the potential bat access features were covered. The surveys were led by an ecologist who holds a Natural England Class 2 Bat Survey Licence for all counties and species in England. The positions of the surveyors during the evening emergence survey are presented on **Figure 2**.
- 3.3. The surveys were undertaken using Batlogger M bat detectors. This survey equipment is considered suitable for detecting all resident species of UK bats.
- 3.4. The surveys were undertaken in appropriate weather conditions and within the recognised bat active season (May to August) for these types of surveys. **Table 1** below provides a summary of the bat surveys undertaken.

Table 1: Summary of Evening Emergence Bat Survey

Date	Dusk Time	Time start / end (GMT+1)	Start Weather conditions	Temp at start	Temp at end
08.05.18	20:40	20:25-22:12	BF2*, cloud cover 6/8 Oktas**	22°C	18°C

*Beaufort Scale (0-12)

**Oktas cloud cover scale (0-8)

- 3.5. Recorded bat calls were later analysed using appropriate sound analysis reference publications where appropriate using BatSound 4.1.2b.
- 3.6. Any bats observed were recorded. Information, where relevant, included:
 - Time;
 - Emergence or re-entry points;
 - Direction of flight;
 - Use of landscape;
 - Flight characteristics;
 - Size;
 - Height; and
 - Behaviour.

¹⁵ Collins. J (2016) *Bat Survey for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines*. 3rd Edition.

4. Results

- 4.1. No bats were observed emerging or entering building B3 or B7 during the evening emergence survey. Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* passes were recorded between 20:54 and 22:12 by the bat surveyors and further details are provided below:
- Surveyor 1 recorded four common pipistrelle passes at 21:02, 21:24, 21:56 and 22:12, however these bats were not seen;
 - Surveyor 2 recorded twenty-one common pipistrelle passes at 20:54, 20:57, 21:00, 21:01, 21:02, 21:04, 21:08, 21:20, 21:21, 21:22, 21:35, 21:43, 21:44, 21:45, 21:46, 21:47, 21:54, 22:00, 22:02, 22:07 and 22:09. The bats recorded at 20:54, 20:57, 21:00, 21:01, 21:02 and 21:08 were observed passing west to east and east to west over B7. All other bat recordings were heard but not seen; and
 - Surveyor 3 recorded twenty-six common pipistrelle passes at 20:54, 20:55, 20:58, 21:01, 21:02, 21:05, 21:08, 21:10, 21:19, 21:20, 21:21, 21:22, 21:23, 21:24, 21:25, 21:35, 21:43, 21:44, 21:45, 21:46, 21:47, 21:56, 21:58, 22:01, 22:02 and 22:07. Activity recorded was similar to Surveyor 2, with the exception that foraging activity was recorded at 21:01, 21:19, 21:47 and 22:02 to the west of B7.
- 4.2. Based on the bat surveyor observations it is considered that a small number of common pipistrelle bats (1-23 individuals) were recorded at the Site. Common pipistrelle is considered to be the most common and widespread bat species in England (population over 100,000)¹⁶. The average roost emergence time for common pipistrelle is 24.8 minutes after sunset¹⁷. Given that the first bat was recorded fourteen minutes after to sunset, it is considered likely that this bat is roosting near the Site.
- 4.3. Given that no bats were recorded emerging or entering B3 or B7, it is considered unlikely that B3 or B7 would support roosting bats and therefore these buildings are currently of **negligible** value to roosting bats.

¹⁶ Wray, S., Wells, D., Long, E., Mitchell-Jones, T. (2010): 'Valuing Bats in Ecological Impact Assessment', IEEM In-Practice

¹⁷ Andrews Ecology (2017) A review of empirical data in respect of emergence and return times reported for the UK's 17 native bat species.

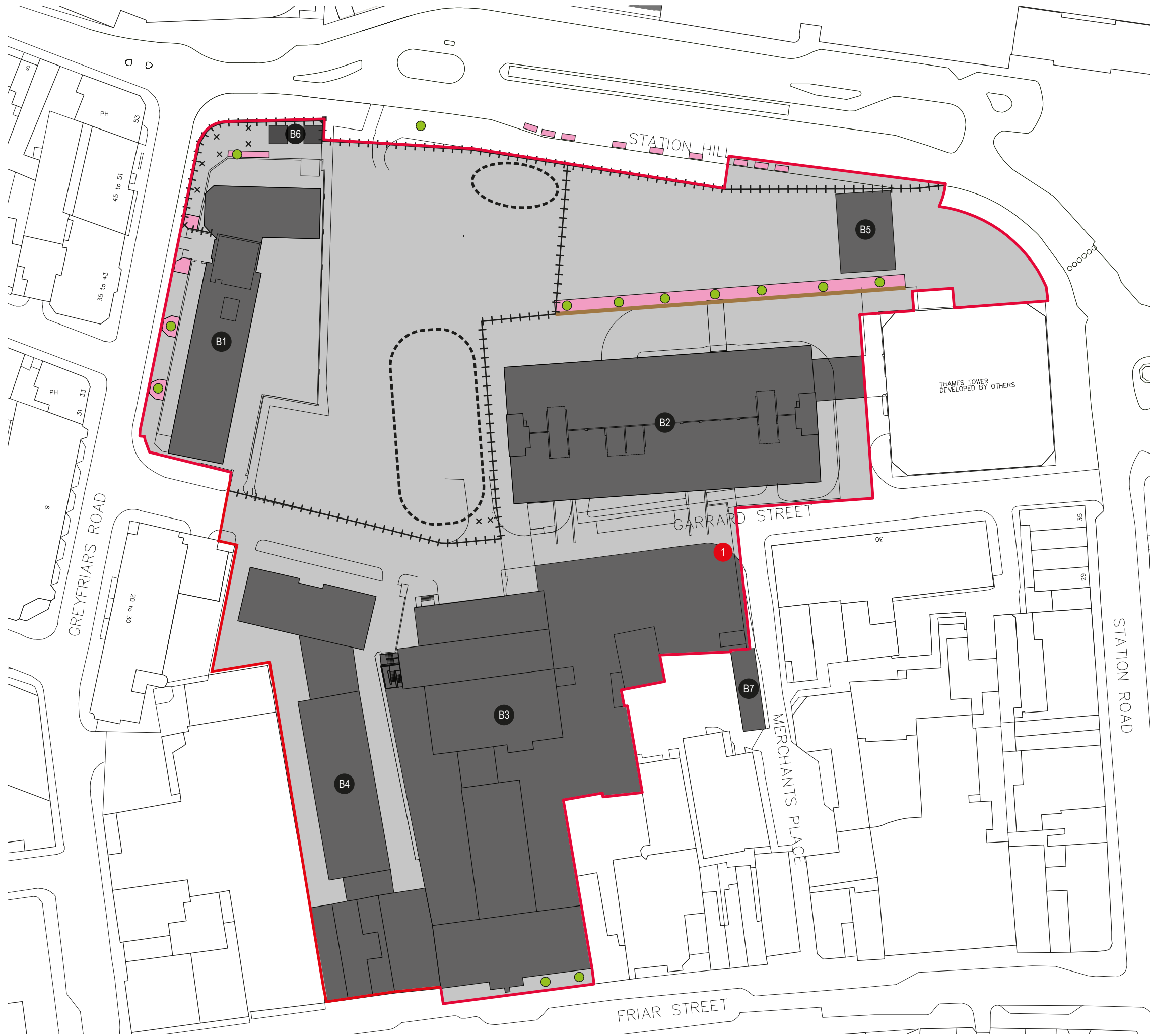
5. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 5.1. No evidence of roosting bats was recorded during the surveys of building B3 or B7. It is therefore assessed that the proposed demolition of B3 as part of the Development would not have any impacts on roosting bats either at B3 or the adjacent B7.
- 5.2. All other built structures and trees on Site have been identified as having **negligible** potential to support roosting bats. As such, no further assessment of these buildings/trees is required prior to any demolition works as part of the Development.
- 5.3. In line with Outline Planning Condition 30, if a significant period of time elapses (normally considered by most local planning authorities as being over 2 years) between this report being produced and the proposed Development works being undertaken, the buildings may deteriorate in condition and should be subject to an update survey to determine if their potential to support roosting bats has changed.
- 5.4. In line with local planning policy CS36, it is recommended that the future development provides bat boxes to enhance opportunities on Site for roosting bats. The bat boxes should be erected at least 4m above ground level facing south, south-east or south-west, be positioned in proximity to vegetated habitats and not lit by artificial lighting. The exact details of the bat box locations and models will be finalised by an ecologist in liaison with the architect / project team during the detailed design of the future development. The use of native plant species within the future development's landscape design would provide additional foraging and commuting habitat for bats at the Site.

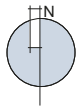
FIGURES

Figure 1: 'Extended' Phase 1 Habitat Survey Plan (WIE14788-100_GR_PEA_1A)

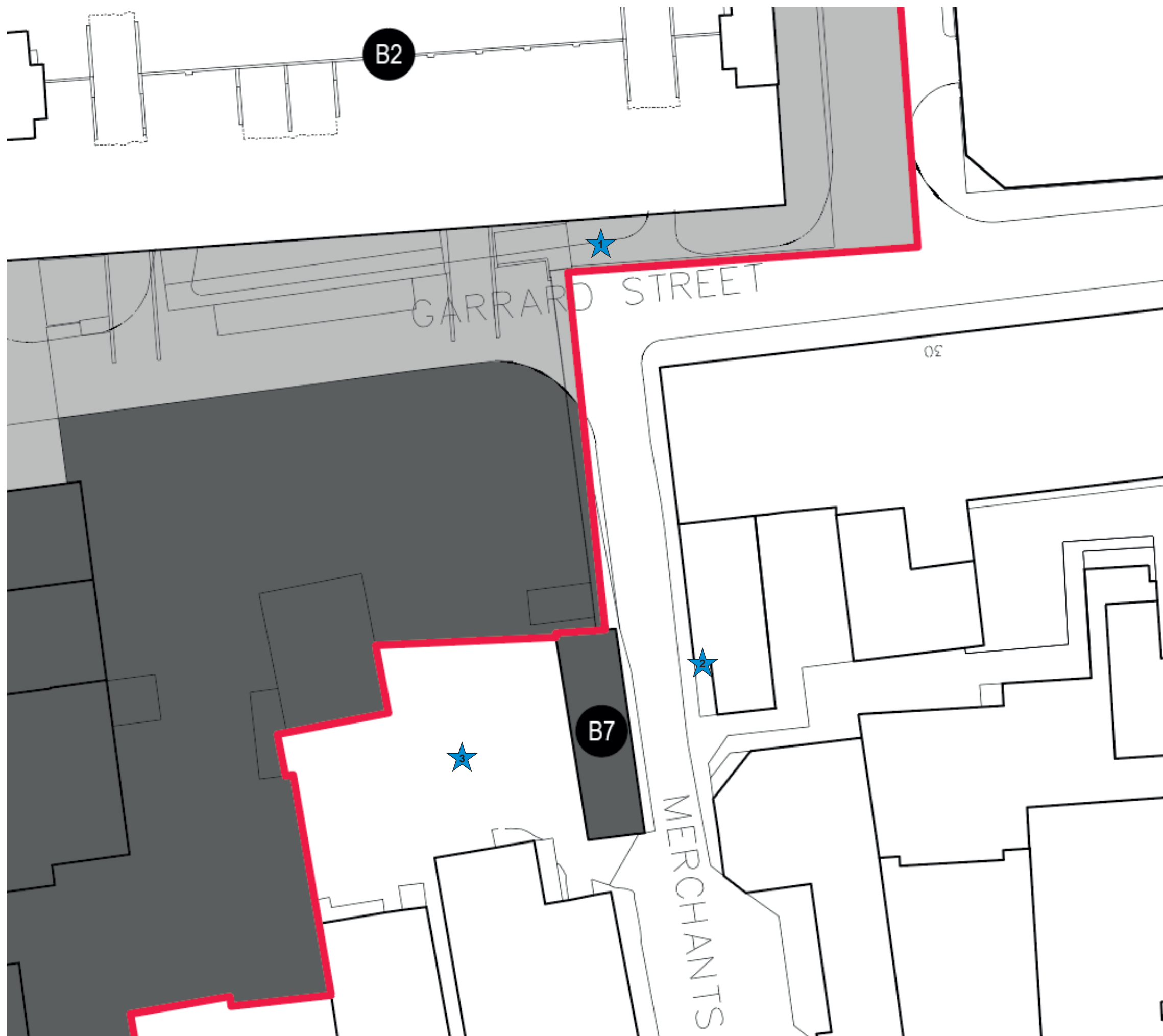
Figure 2: Bat Surveyor Locations (WIE14788-100_GR_EC_1A)



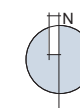
- Site Boundary
- Buildings
- Hardstanding
- Tree
- Ornamental Planting
- Ephemeral / Short Perennial
- Wall
- Aggregate Stockpiles
- Fence
- Target Note



Project Details	WIE14788-100: Station Hill, Reading
Figure Title	Figure 1: 'Extended' Phase 1 Habitat Survey Plan
Figure Ref	WIE14788-100_GR_PEA_1A
Date	August 2018
File Location	\\s-lncs\wiel\projects\wie14788\100\graphics\peal\issued figures

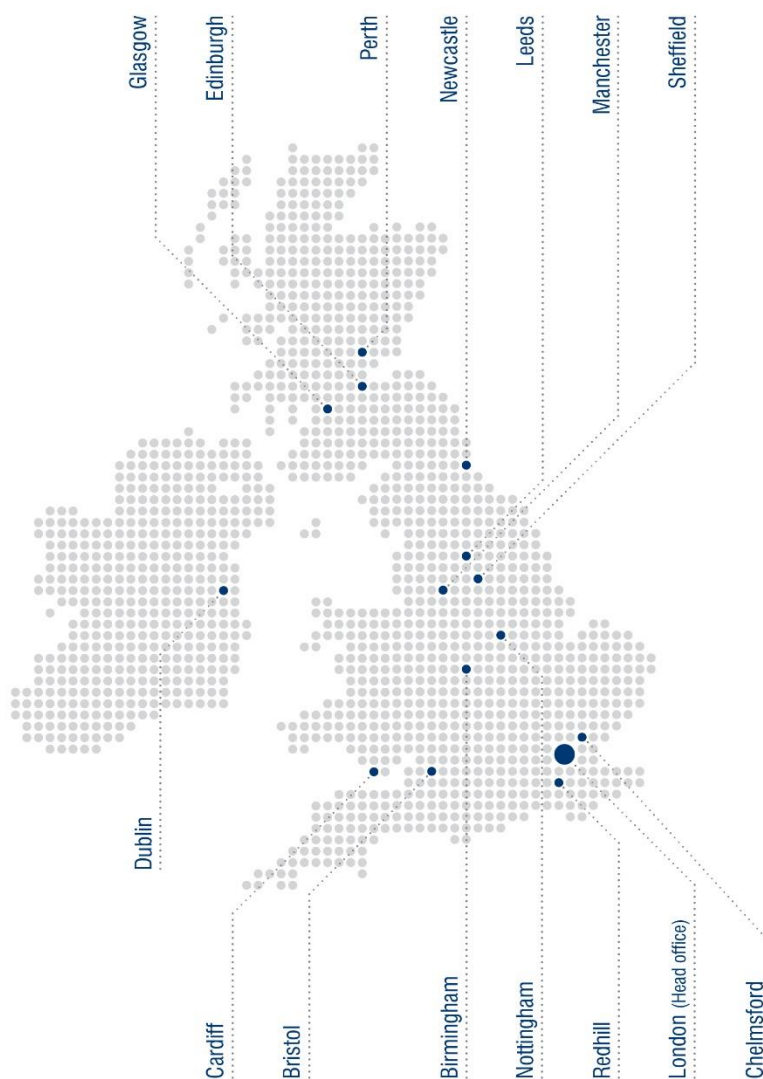


-  Site Boundary
-  Buildings
-  Hardstanding
-  Bat Surveyor Locations



Project Details	WIE14788-100: Station Hill, Reading
Figure Title	Figure 2: Bat Surveyor Locations
Figure Ref	WIE14788-100_GR_EC_1A
Date	August 2018
File Location	\\s-incs\wie\projects\wie14788\100\graphics\ec\issued figures

UK and Ireland Office Locations



Annex 3 List of Consented or Reasonably Foreseeable Schemes To Be Assessed Cumulatively

Schemes in greyed out text are assumed to have been superseded by subsequent applications for the same site.

Site	Application Reference	Proposal	Decision / Date	Distance and direction from the Site (at its closest point)
Former Sorting Office Caversham Road/Vastern Road Reading RG1 1AA	11/00276/OUT	Outline planning application with all matters reserved with the exception of means of access, for the demolition of existing buildings; site preparation; and redevelopment of the application site for a mix of uses from amongst employment and business uses (use class B1) and residential accommodation (C3); Hotel (C1), retail floor space (A1), food and drink uses (A3, A4 and A5), leisure uses (D2), car parking, public and private open space, landscaping works, highways, access and associated works.	Approved 26/03/2012	150m north
Building B, Station Hill 3	151543	Reserved Matters application for Building B of Station Hill 3	N/A	Within the Site
29-35 Station Road, Reading, RG1 1LG	Application to be submitted shortly	Demolition of existing building and the erection of an approximately 22 storey building. As advised by Reading Borough Council, model information has been taken from previous application for a similar scheme (Application ref: 04/01395/FUL)	N/A	45m south-east Assumed to be superseded by the later application below.
29-35 Station Road, Reading RG1 1LG	170772	Change of use of 1st to 5th floors from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 33 x 1-bed flats. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended).	Approved 10/07/17	45m south east.
Garrard House 30 Garrard Street Reading RG1 1NR	150556	Extension to include part new fourth floor and new fifth and sixth floors to provide 23 residential units.	Pending decision	Immediately adjacent to the east of the Site. Assumed to be superseded by the later application below
Garrard House 30 Garrard Street Reading RG1 1NR	160328	Extension to include part new fourth floor and new fifth and sixth floors to provide 18 residential units.	Approved 21/06/16	Immediately adjacent to the east of the Site.

Site	Application Reference	Proposal	Decision / Date	Distance and direction from the Site (at its closest point)
52 to 55 Friar Street and 12 Grayfriars Road, Reading RG1 1DX	162210	Demolition of existing building and structures (Class A1) and erection of 3 new buildings ranging between 6 - 12 (and basement) storeys in height to provide 135 (1xstudio, 54x1, 73x2 & 7x3-bed) residential units (Class C3), a flexible Class A1-A5 use at ground floor level fronting onto Friar St, a flexible Class A1-5, B1(a) or D2 (gym only) use at ground floor level fronting onto Greyfriars Rd, with associated access, parking, servicing, landscaping and engineering works (amended description).	Approved 20/03/18	Immediately adjacent to the west of the Site.
Bristol and West Arcade, Market Place	180358	Demolition of vacant former Bristol & West Arcade (173 – 175 Friar Street) and erection of an eight storey mixed-use building (plus basement) to provide 35 residential units, 4,212 sqm of B1 office floorspace, and 5 retail units (A1/A2/A3), demolition of rear parts of 29 – 31 and 32 Market Place, the change of use of the retained units at 27 – 28, 29 - 31 Market Place at first, second and third floors to provide 8 residential units, change of use at ground and basement level of 32 Market Place from A2 to flexible retail use (A1/A2/A3), retention of 260.4 sqm of A4 use at ground and basement at 29-31 Market Place, change of use at ground and basement of 27 - 28 Market Place to flexible retail use (A1/A2/A3), and associated internal and external works to the Listed Buildings, landscaping, refuse, plant, cycle stores and substation at basement level.	Resolution to Grant July 2018	300m to the east. Potential for cumulative townscape effects.
Land between Weldale Street and Chatham Street	170326	Demolition of all existing buildings (including 3 retail units) and structures, and erection of new buildings ranging between lower ground & 4 storeys to lower ground & 11 storeys in height, providing 427 (233x1, 182x2 & 12x3-bed) residential units (Class C3) and 1 flexible ground floor retail shop (Class A1) or restaurant and cafe (Class A3) unit, together with new public realm, landscaping, accesses, parking and associated works (amended description).	Approved 15 March 2018	180m to the west of the Site. Potential for cumulative townscape effects.