
EASTLANDS ARENA LTD

COOP LIVE WALKING ROUTE

ECOLOGICAL INSPECTION FOR BATS AND BIRDS

Helen Hamilton Ecology Limited
87 Mellor Road
New Mills
Derbyshire
SK224DX

Author
Helen Hamilton BSc, MSc, CEnv, MCIEEM

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Client	Eastlands Arena Ltd
Site	COOP Live Walking Route
NGR	SJ 86028 98534 to SJ 86713 98716
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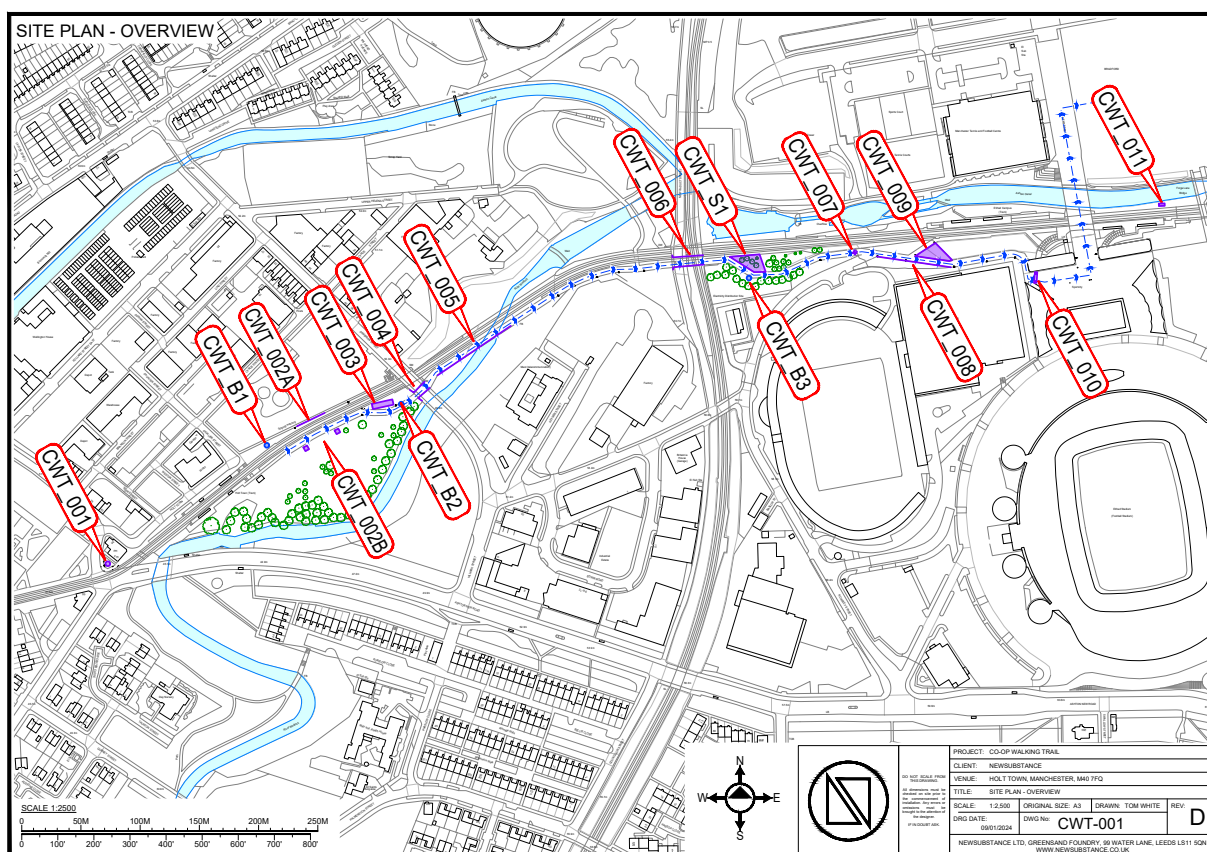
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Helen Hamilton Ecology Limited was commissioned to follow up the Ecological Update Report (dated February 2024) for the COOP Live Walking Route proposals with an inspection of potential bat roost features and bird nesting areas at two locations.
- 1.2 The walking route extends from Holt Town tram stop at SJ86028 98534 eastwards to the Manchester City Etihad Stadium at SJ86713 98716. The route largely follows the tramline and is already a well-appointed formal urban walking route to which the proposals add new light installations at a number of locations, as shown in Figure 1.
- 1.3 The two locations for inspection were as follows:
 - CWT_002A
 - CWT_006.

Figure 1 Site Plan



2. METHODS

- 2.1 The survey work was led by Helen Hamilton MCIEEM¹ (Natural England Class 2 Bat Licence ref: CLS03190, 2015-15840-CLS-CLS-L2). Helen is appropriately experienced and qualified to carry out surveys of this type for protected species based on the CIEEM competencies for survey (CIEEM 2013).
- 2.2 The inspection was carried out on 9th March 2024 at both CWT_002A and CWT_006.
- 2.3 The work was conducted from a Mobile Elevated Work Platform (MEWP), during a planned tramline closure.

Bat Inspection

- 2.4 The bat Inspection focussed on CWT_002A and CWT_006.
- 2.5 The survey approach and methods followed those outlined in Collins 2023.
- 2.6 The inspection for bats looked for evidence of bats and for features close to each installation with potential to host bats. The survey aimed to determine the actual or potential presence of bats and identify the appropriate level of further survey and/or mitigation. High-powered torch, endoscope and binoculars were used to examine potential roost features.

Breeding Birds

- 2.7 Vegetation at CWT_002A was inspected for evidence of breeding birds, including looking for nests and incidental observations of nesting behaviour.

Limitations

- 2.8 The northern wall of CWT_006 was not directly accessible for inspection as the MEWP was not able to drive onto the tram tracks. However, the road bridge was not suitable as there were no gaps for bats to use for roosting. The rail bridge was inspected from a distance using the MEWP to gain a good line of sight plus binoculars and powerful torch.

¹ Full Member of Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)

3. RESULTS

Bat Inspection

- 3.1 At CWT_002A, the full section of wall from the footpath crossing of the tramlines to the Hillkirk Street bridge was inspected, and no suitable bat roost sites found. The bat roost potential of this area was classified as 'None' according to Collins 2023.
- 3.2 At CWT_006, there is a confirmed swarming roost for common pipistrelle (dating from 2006) but no further detail on the dates and timings involved was available.
- 3.3 Figure 2 illustrates this location, which is spanned by two bridges running south to north; the New Viaduct Street road bridge to the west, and the rail bridge to the east.
- 3.4 The New Viaduct Street Bridge had no gaps on the underside where the piers meet the span, either to the north or the south. There is no bat roost potential on its underside.
- 3.5 On the south side of the rail bridge, gaps were inspected from the footpath (left side of Figure 2, Figure 3) and no evidence of bats found. The section is actively lit at night (all night) and there are some gaps with low potential to the rear of a concrete shelf. If present, bat evidence here would be easy to see and would collect and be protected from weathering, but none was visible. Both corners had accessible voids but there was evidence of bird nesting material (possible pigeon or jackdaw) in both corners making bat use unlikely (Figure 4). The bird nesting material did not look recently accumulated – probably from previous seasons.
- 3.6 On the north side of the rail bridge, similar structure was visible across the tram tracks (Figure 5) but could not be inspected due to accessibility issues.
- 3.7 In summary, a bat roost is very unlikely to be present along the south side of the rail bridge where the visual design artwork is proposed. However, the roost may exist on the north side of the tramway.

Figure 2 CWT_006 New Viaduct Street (Near) and Rail Bridge (Far)



Figure 3 Rail Bridge South Side with Existing Artificial Lighting at Night



Figure 4 Rail Bridge South Side Old Bird Nesting Material



Figure 5 Rail Bridge North Side, Not Accessible



Breeding Birds

- 3.8 The vegetation along the CWT_002A section was predominantly thin plants of buddleia (*Buddleia davidii*) growing directly out of the mortar along the wall, with some wisps overhanging from the park above. Mostly, this vegetation was not suited to bird nesting and no nests or breeding behaviour was noted.
- 3.9 A single denser bush was present (Figure 6) which appeared to contain a nest, possibly from 2023 season.

Figure 6 Bush Containing Bird Nest



4. CONCLUSIONS

CWT_002A

- 4.1 The elevated inspection using MEWP found no potential for or evidence of bats at this location.
- 4.2 An old and possibly active bird nest was located in a bush overhanging the wall, to left of Figure 7. No bird activity was noted in relation to this nest, but at this time of year a precautionary approach is advisable. However, the area from which vegetation needs to be removed, also shown in Figure 7, lies at least 5m away from the works area and will not be affected. Thus, no further action is necessary during localised vegetation removal and installation of the content wall within the rectangle indicated in Figure 7.

Figure 7 Location of CWT_002A Installation and bird nest



CWT_006

- 4.3 According to ecological records provided to this project (and reported in the Ecological Update Report February 2024), CWT_006 is a confirmed bat roost. Based on data collected in 2006, 2 common pipistrelle bats were seen swarming here on 25th May and the site was termed 'swarming (roost)'.
- 4.4 Bat swarming sites are defined (Collins 2023) as where male and female bats gather, thought to be for mating purposes, and roosting may occur alongside the swarming activity in associated structures. Such swarming typically occurs in September and October. This bat roost was observed in May so the activity indicates a more commonly seen roosting behaviour in which bats 'swarm' before re-entering a day roost. Numbers of bats indicate non-breeding, so the roost would probably most correctly be defined as a summer non-breeding day roost of 2 common pipistrelles.
- 4.5 The vertical wall and underside of the span on the south side of the Rail Bridge were inspected using MEWP and no evidence of bats found. The structure was such that potential was also low and it is not considered likely that a bat roost, is located in this area. The whole footpath area is strongly lit at night which is likely to further discourage bats from roosting here. There was also no evidence of recent breeding bird activity in this area.

- 4.6 It was not possible to search the north side of the bridge due to access for the MEWP over the tram tracks. Due to darker ambient night-time conditions, the bat roost is more likely to be situated over here.
- 4.7 A brief description of the proposed works is provided in Box 1, based upon a document supplied to Network Rail in relation to the combined rail / road bridge and New Viaduct Street (New Substance 2024). With respect to the bridges at CWT_006, the scheme proposes lighting of the brickwork on the south wall, immediately adjacent to the pathway using a series of narrow beam fixtures to deliver a chromatic shadow lighting effect during operational hours (Figure 8). Whilst there is expected to be a small overall increase in lighting levels within the bridge area, no direct lighting is intended to project north beyond the existing Metrolink fence line, onto the tram tracks or the opposite side of the bridge.
- 4.8 Therefore, the impact from new proposals upon any bat roost on the north side of the bridge is likely to be minimal, as conditions for bats roosting there will likely remain close to existing.
- 4.9 Non-breeding day roosts of low numbers of common pipistrelle are at the lower end of the conservation value spectrum (Reason & Wray 2023). Minor impacts upon such as site are not likely to affect the favourable conservation status of common pipistrelle populations in this locality. However, some mitigation measures could be implemented to provide further assurances in this regard, and potentially provide enhancements for bats and other wildlife.

Box 1 Outline of Installation Proposals

Architectural lighting proposed across the installations along the walking route from Holt Town to the Etihad campus, will contribute to a net increase in overall ambient light levels, but provide necessary improvements to the user experience to both engage and encourage uptake of walking as a mode of transport to the Etihad campus / Co-op Live venue, in line with commitments to improving overall event sustainability.

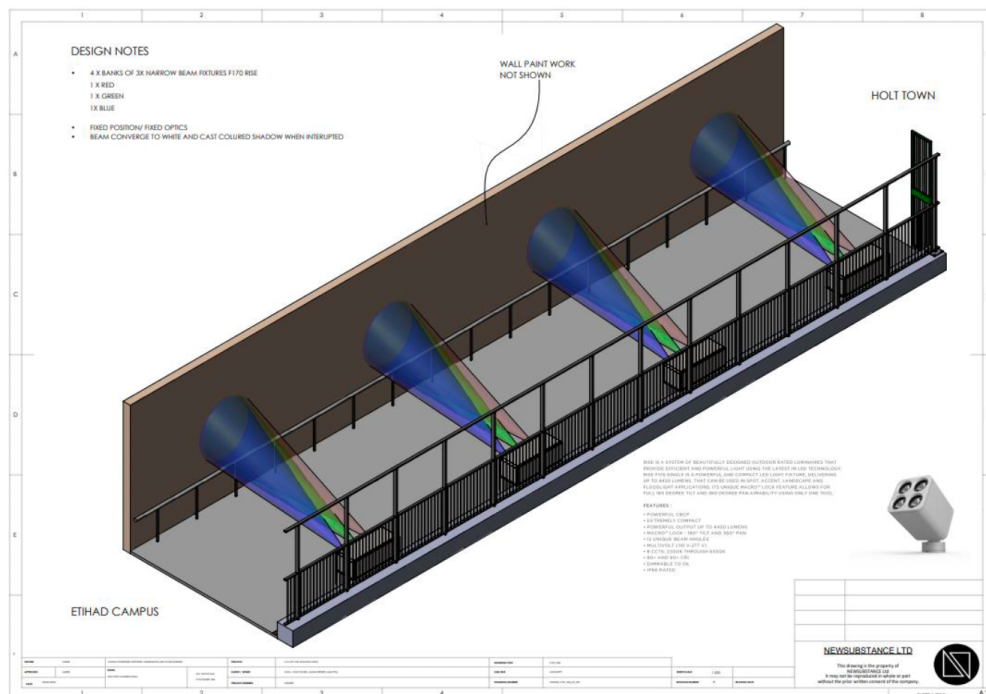
Lighting is controllable across the route, and adjustable on an installation-by-installation basis.

The system provides adjustment / pre-programming and scheduling of:

- Overall Brightness levels
- Duration (on / off periods)
- Temporary event specific lighting programming / scheduling
- Self-adjusting to ambient light levels
- Programmable specific seasonal lighting requirements

Figure 8 CWT_006 Construction (after New Substance 2024)

CWT 006 CONSTRUCTION



Mitigation Measures

- 4.10 Possible negative impacts upon bats could be further reduced by a sympathetic lighting programme, which results in reduced lighting levels outside of key periods such as matches or events. In fact, reductions in overall lighting at times of low traffic could potentially deliver a benefit for bats.
- 4.11 Further benefits for bats could be achieved by:
- Respecting the dark zones identified in the Ecological Update Report Feb 2024 (Appendix 1).
 - Installation of suitable bat boxes on the bridge north side at CWT_006, as suggested in Appendix 2, or with similar locations and types. Such installation should be advised by an ecologist.
- 4.12 Taking all these into account a net benefit for bats could be achieved from this scheme.

REFERENCES

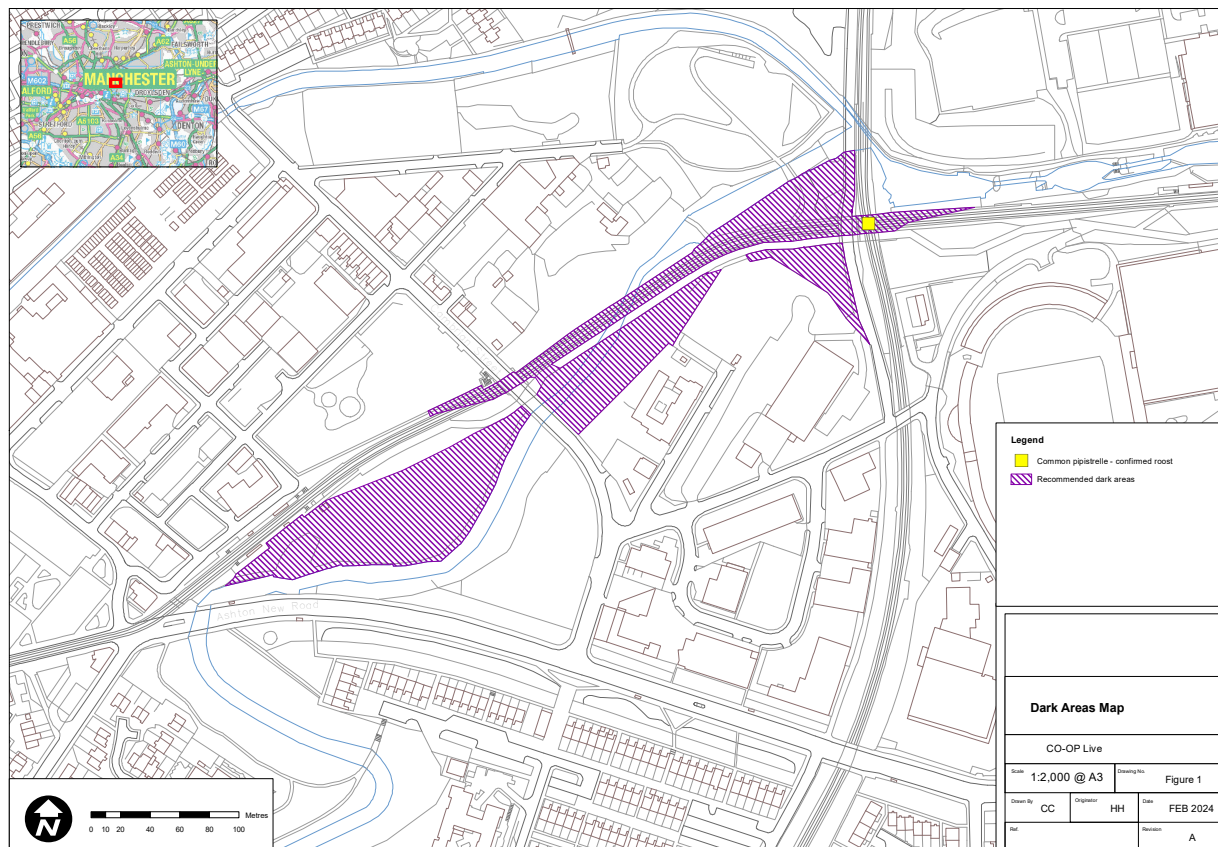
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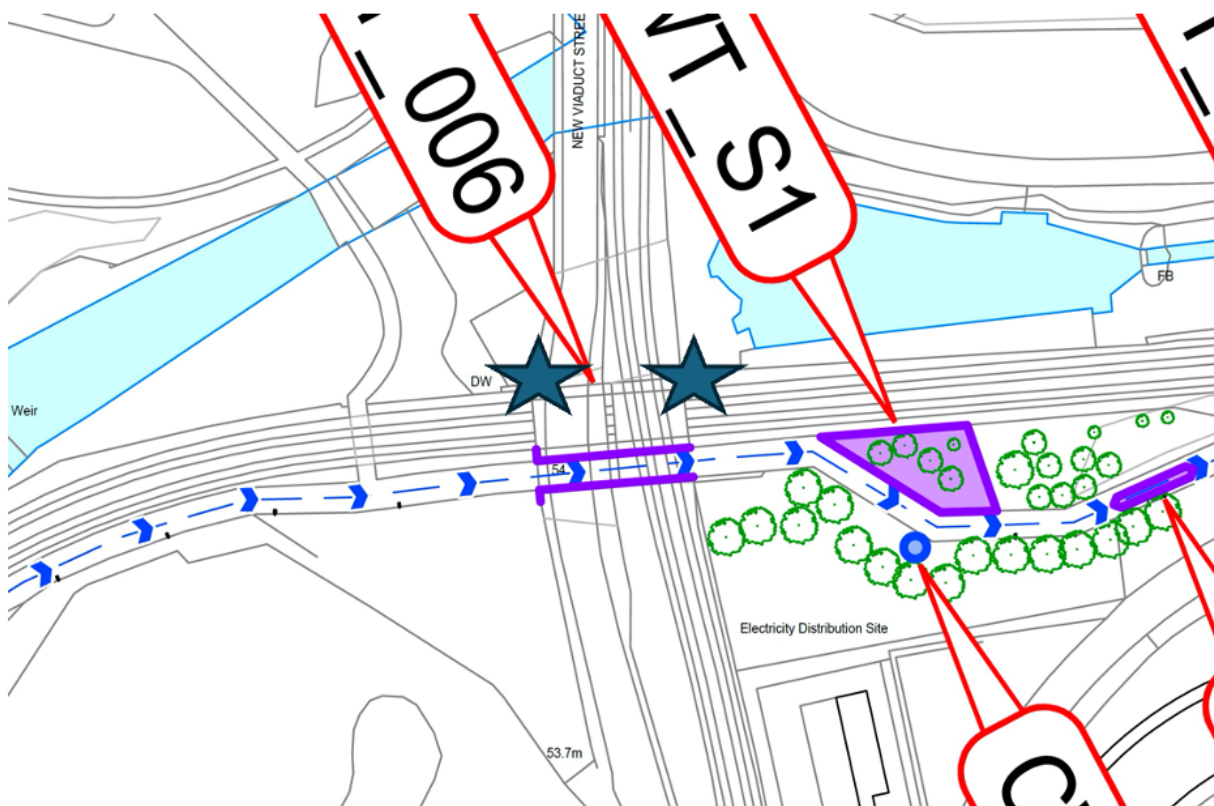
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APPENDIX 1 DARK ZONES



APPENDIX 2 EXAMPLE BAT BOX LOCATIONS ★



E.G. Beaumaris WoodStone Bat Box Midi

