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GROUND LEVEL & AERIAL TREE ASSESSMENT

At

Octagon House
Hathersage Road
Victoria Park
Rusholme
M13 9WL

NGR: SJ 85613 95962

Prepared for:	Turley Associates Ltd
Written by:	Mark Halliwell, UES Senior Ecologist



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is written by Mark Halliwell MBiol PGDiP, Senior Ecologist at United Environmental Services (UES) Ltd. It provides an assessment of the potential impacts on bats as a result of the arboricultural works associated with the development at Octagon House, Rusholme. The applicant seeks full planning application for the refurbishment and extension of Octagon House and the erection of buildings of up to 11 storeys in height to accommodate a mix of uses comprising Purpose Built Student Accommodation bedrooms (205 studios and 35 apartments accommodating 255 bedrooms) (Sui Generis Use Class); Key Worker accommodation (Sui Generis Use Class) (211 units); Residential units (16 no) (Use Class C3); 2,568 sq m of healthcare use (including the retention of an existing healthcare facility on site) (Use Class Ee); and 394 sq m of commercial or community uses (Use Classes Ea, Eb, Eciii, Ee, Ef, F1e, F2b, F2c) with associated site access, car and cycle parking and landscaping.

All trees scheduled to be felled or subject to arboricultural works, as indicated within Land Use Consultants Ltd June 2026 arboricultural impact assessment (project number 17327, dated 2nd June 2026), were subject to a ground level tree assessment (GLTA) by UES on 15th July 2026. All potential roosting features (PRFs) were closely inspected for bat presence and features associated with bat activity, as detailed in Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) 4th edition guidance (2023). Trees which contained PRFs that were not fully visible from the ground level were subject to further aerial tree assessments (ATA) on 15th July 2026 to determine their suitability to support roosting bats.

In general, the immediate surrounding area to the site is considered to provide low quality foraging and commuting habitats for bats, owing to its heavily urbanised nature. Whilst habitats of higher quality are present in the wider surrounding area, these are largely cut off from the site by man-made barriers to movement.

The trees have been categorised as either none or PRF-I as a result of the bat surveys undertaken onsite:

- **None – T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12, T13, T16, T18 were assessed as negligible potential to support roosting bats (none). No further survey work or mitigation measures are required.**
- **PRF-I - T15, T17, T19 were assessed as having features suitable to support individual or low numbers of roosting bats. Therefore, they should be subject to soft felling techniques or a pre-commencement inspection by a licensed bat ecologist, to minimise any incidental risk of harm to bats.**

If any trees are due to be felled or subject to arboricultural works that have not been surveyed as part of this assessment, then they should be subject to a ground level tree assessment (any time of year), with further surveys undertaken during the peak bat survey season (May to August inclusive), if required.

Due to the potential of breeding birds nesting within trees, any arboricultural work, tree felling, or vegetation clearance should be carried out outside of the nesting bird season and should not be undertaken from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible and works need to commence during the period, a breeding bird nest check should be undertaken immediately prior to the commencement of works by a suitably qualified ecologist and an ecological clerk of works appointed to oversee the works if considered necessary.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Author, surveyors and qualifications

This report has been compiled and written by Mark Halliwell MBiol, UES Senior Ecologist. Mark is licensed by Natural England to disturb, take and handle all species of bats under licence number 2025-86040-CL18-BAT (level 2). Surveyors present included:

- Robert Mooney MSc, UES Ecologist. Robert is listed as an accredited agent on the bat survey licence of Toby Hart (2015-15898-CLS-CLS (level 3) and 2015-15899-CLS-CLS (level 4)). As such, he has been deemed competent to undertake licensable activities such as using a torch and endoscope to survey for bats. Robert is trained in tree climbing and aerial rescue to CS38 level.
- Nathaniel Foley MSci, UES Graduate Ecologist. Nathaniel is listed as an accredited agent on the bat survey licence of Toby Hart (2025-85916-CL19/20-BAT (level 3 & 4)). As such, he has been deemed competent to undertake licensable activities such as using an endoscope to survey for bats. Nathaniel is trained in tree climbing and aerial rescue to CS38 level.

All surveyors have the knowledge, skills and experience identified within CIEEM's "Competencies for Species Survey: Bats" (2013), or were under the supervision of a surveyor with the required competencies.

1.2 Survey objectives

UES was commissioned in June 2026 to conduct site surveys which include the following activities:

- Undertake a ground level tree assessment to assess the suitability and potential for the trees on site to be used by roosting bats
- Where necessary, conduct subsequent aerial tree inspections to further assess the suitability of potential roosting features within trees and / or to confirm bat presence / absence.
- Recommend further surveys, mitigation and compensation, where appropriate

1.3 Proposed development

The applicant seeks full planning application for the refurbishment and extension of Octagon House and the erection of buildings of up to 11 storeys in height to accommodate a mix of uses comprising Purpose Built Student Accommodation bedrooms (205 studios and 35 apartments accommodating 255 bedrooms) (Sui Generis Use Class); Key Worker accommodation (Sui Generis Use Class) (211 units); Residential units (16 no) (Use Class C3); 2,568 sq m of healthcare use (including the retention of an existing healthcare facility on site) (Use Class Ee); and 394 sq m of commercial or community uses (Use Classes Ea, Eb, Eciii, Ee, Ef, F1e, F2b, F2c) with associated site access, car and cycle parking and landscaping.

1.4 Structure of the report

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

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

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 General

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

The habitats on site and in the surrounding area were also assessed in order to gauge their suitability to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats.

2.2 Ground level tree assessment

All trees scheduled to be felled or subject to arboricultural works, as indicated within Land Use Consultants Ltd June 2026 arboricultural impact assessment (project number 17327, dated 2nd June 2026), were subject to a ground level tree assessment (GLTA) by UES on 15th July 2026. All potential roosting features (PRFs) were closely inspected for bat presence and features associated with bat activity, as detailed in Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) 4th edition guidance (2023).

The ground level assessment was carried out on 15th July 2026 by Robert Mooney and Nathaniel Foley, using binoculars and a high-powered torch. Where possible, an endoscope was also used to inspect any cavities accessible from ground level. Using binoculars, all trees were inspected on all aspects and assessed for their potential to support roosting bats, based on the number and quality of PRFs present, as detailed in BS8596:2023 Surveying for Bats in Trees and Woodland and BCT guidelines (Collins, 2023).

Types of PRFs, as described in Bat Roosts in Trees (Bat Tree Habitat Key, 2018) are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Types of PRFs found in trees

DISEASE & DECAY FEATURES	DAMAGE FEATURES	ASSOCIATION FEATURES	OTHER FEATURES
Woodpecker holes	Lightning strikes	Fluting	Bat boxes
Squirrel holes	Hazard beams	Ivy	Bird boxes
Knot holes	Subsidence cracks		
Pruning cuts	Shearing cracks		
Tear-outs	Transverse snaps		
Wounds	Welds		
Cankers	Lifting bark		
Compression forks	Desiccation fissures		
Butt rots	Frost cracks		

With regards to the presence of PRFs, trees have been categorised as per the BCT 4th edition guidance (2023):

- NONE – No PRFs are known to be present within the tree, and it is unlikely that the tree will contain any PRFs.

- FAR – Further assessment is required to establish if any PRFs are present within the tree, potentially due to the large size or age of the tree or limitations to assess the tree in detail from ground level.

- PRF – The tree is known to contain at least one PRF.

Where PRFs could be fully viewed from ground level, individual PRFs were categorised according to the following system:

- PRF-I – The PRF is only suitable for individual bats or a very small number of bats, either due to size of the feature or lack of suitable surrounding habitats.

- PRF-M – The PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.

2.3 Aerial tree assessment

The GLTA highlighted one tree as having potential to support roosting bats, which was subject to further aerial tree assessments as a result. These assessments were undertaken on 15th July 2026 by Robert Mooney and Nathniel Foley.

PRFs highlighted by the GLTA that were not fully accessible or inspectable from the ground level were climbed using ropes and harnesses by trained professionals in order in inspect the features more closely using an endoscope.

Based on the quality of features present, potential roosting features were then either discounted as being unsuitable or re-classified using the updated survey information as PRF-I or PRF-M.

2.4 Survey limitations

No limitations were associated with the surveys.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Habitat assessment

The proposed development site has an area of approximately 1.18a. It is comprised of an office complex with an associated hardstanding carpark. Areas of introduced shrub are located throughout the site, with a large area located along the western site boundary. An area of sparsely vegetated urban land with encroaching ephemeral and ruderal species is located within the southwest corner of the site. Scattered trees are located onsite, primarily at the western site boundary and south-western corner of the site

3.2 Ground level tree assessment

All trees scheduled to be felled or subject to arboricultural works, as indicated within Land Use Consultants Ltd June 2026 arboricultural impact assessment (project number 17327, dated 2nd June 2026), were subject to a ground level tree assessment by UES.

A summary of the GLTA results is provided in Table 2 below, and full details of the survey results are provided at Appendix 1 of this report with a tree location plan provided at Appendix 2.

Table 2 – Results of the ground level tree assessment

Tree / group number	Potential to support roosting bats following GLTA
T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T12, T13, T16, T18	None
T11,	PRF
T15, T17, T19	PRF-I

3.3 Aerial tree assessment

The GLTA highlighted one tree as having PRFs that could not be inspected from ground level, T11. This tree which was climbed using ropes and harnesses by trained professionals in order in inspect the features more closely using an endoscope. Based on the quality of features present, potential roosting features were then either discounted as being unsuitable or re-classified using the updated survey information as PRF-I or PRF-M. A summary of the ATA results is provided at Table 3 below, and full details of the survey results are provided at Appendix 2 of this report.

Table 3 – Results of the aerial tree assessment

Tree / group number	Potential to support roosting bats following GLTA	Potential to support roosting bats following ATA
T11	PRF	None

4 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Evaluation of results

The site is primarily hardstanding which is of low suitability for foraging and commuting bats.

All trees scheduled to be felled or subject to arboricultural works, as indicated within Land Use Consultants Ltd June 2026 arboricultural impact assessment (project number 17327, dated 2nd June 2026), were subject to a ground level tree assessment and further aerial inspections where required.

A summary of the GLTA and ATA results are provided at Table 4 below. No bats or fields of bats were recorded within these trees, or within any other trees subject to an inspection.

Table 4 – Results of the ground level tree assessment and aerial tree assessment

Tree / group number	Potential to support roosting bats following GLTA & ATA
T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6	None – negligible potential to support roosting bats

4.2 Mitigation and compensation measures

4.2.1 Mitigation

Table 5 – Required mitigation measures following GLTA & ATA

Tree / group number	Potential to support roosting bats following GLTA & ATA
T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12, T13, T16, T18	None - no further surveys or mitigation measures, with regards to bats, are required ahead of tree felling or arboricultural works.
T15, T17, T19	PRF-I – no further surveys are required, but the features identified should be subject to soft felling techniques or a pre-commencement inspection by a licensed bat ecologist, to minimise any incidental risk of harm to bats. Soft felling techniques involve cutting the tree in sections and lowering any section containing PRFs to the ground. Once lowered to the ground, the PRFs should be left facing upwards overnight, before being removed from the site at a minimum of 24 hours later. Alternatively, the features associated with these trees could also be inspected with an endoscope by a suitably licensed ecologist to confirm bat absence immediately prior to the felling of the tree. In the unlikely event that a roosting bat is observed, works must stop immediately until a licence can be secured from Natural England to allow the removal of the bat roost.

If any trees are due to be felled or subject to arboricultural works that have not been surveyed as part of this assessment, then they should be subject to a ground level tree assessment (any time of year), with further surveys undertaken during the peak bat survey season (May to August inclusive), if required.

4.2.2 Compensation and enhancement

If any trees with bat roosting potential are to be felled or any PRFs with bat roosting potential are to be removed through pruning or any other arboricultural works, compensatory bat boxes should be provided to compensate for the loss of potential roosting opportunities.

Additional bat boxes could be installed to provide an ecological enhancement by increasing the availability of roosting opportunities for bats.

4.3 Breeding birds

Due to the potential of breeding birds nesting within trees, any arboricultural work, tree felling, or vegetation clearance should be carried out outside of the nesting bird season and should not be undertaken from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible and works need to commence during the period, a breeding bird nest check should be undertaken immediately prior to the commencement of works by a suitably qualified ecologist and an ecological clerk of works appointed to oversee the works if considered necessary.

5 CONCLUSION

In general, the site provides poor quality habitat for bats, with further areas of surrounding poor quality habitat providing little foraging and commuting opportunities. Roosting opportunities may be present in surrounding buildings.

The trees have been categorised as follows based on the ground-level and aerial tree assessment undertaken onsite:

- None – T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12, T13, T16, T18 were assessed as negligible potential to support roosting bats (none). No further survey work or mitigation measures are required.
- PRF-I - T15, T17, T19 were assessed as having features suitable to support individual or low numbers of roosting bats. Therefore, they should be subject to soft felling techniques or a pre-commencement inspection by a licensed bat ecologist, to minimise any incidental risk of harm to bats.

Due to the potential of breeding birds nesting within trees, any arboricultural work, tree felling, or vegetation clearance should be carried out outside of the nesting bird season and should not be undertaken from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible and works need to commence during the period, a breeding bird nest check should be undertaken immediately prior to the commencement of works by a suitably qualified ecologist and an ecological clerk of works appointed to oversee the works if considered necessary.

6 REFERENCES

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

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines.* (4th ed.) The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

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Bat Tree Habitat Key (2018). *Bat Roosts in Trees*.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Tree survey results

Appendix 1 - Survey results

Site: Octagon House, Rusholme **Job no: UES05361** **Date: 15.07.26** **Surveyors: RM & NF**

Table 1 – Summary of trees surveyed

Tree ref	Species	Age Dead/ alive	Height (m) / DBH (cm)	Description of PRF(s) & position in tree	Tree assessment (None, FAR, PRF)	PRF classification (PRF-I/ PRF-M/ None)	Surrounding habitat context	All aspects of tree seen? Y/N	Climbable (only if qualified)	Photo no.	Notes from inspection of PRF(s)
T6	Field maple *Acer campestre*	Alive Semi-mature	12/ 32	No PRFs identified.	None	N/A	Around the periphery of a car park.	Y	Y	1	
T7	Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*	Alive Semi-mature	7/ 20	No PRFs identified.	None	N/A	Around the periphery of a car park.	Y	Y	2	
T8	Sycamore, Norway maple *Acer platanoides*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*	Alive Semi-mature	4/ 7	No PRFs identified.	None	N/A	Around the periphery of a car park.	Y	Y	3	

T9	Pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*	Alive Semi-mature	8/ 40	No PRFs identified.	None	N/A	Around the periphery of a car park.	Y	Y	4	
T10	European lime *Tilia x vulgaris*	Alive Mature	13/ 70	No PRFs identified.	None	N/A	Around the periphery of a car park.	Y	Y	5	
T11	European lime	Alive Mature	21/ 70	11.1 – knot hole at a height of 10m on the north aspect of the tree. Subject to aerial inspection and found to be superficial. The feature has a diameter of 5cm but does not extend into a sheltered cavity. 11.2 – knot hole at a height of 6m on the south aspect of the tree. Subject to aerial inspection and found to be superficial. The feature has a diameter of 10cm but does not extend into a sheltered cavity.	PRF	None	Around the periphery of a car park.	Y	Y	6, 14 - 16	Two PRFs were noted from ground level but upon closer inspection as part of the ATA, they were assessed as 'None'.

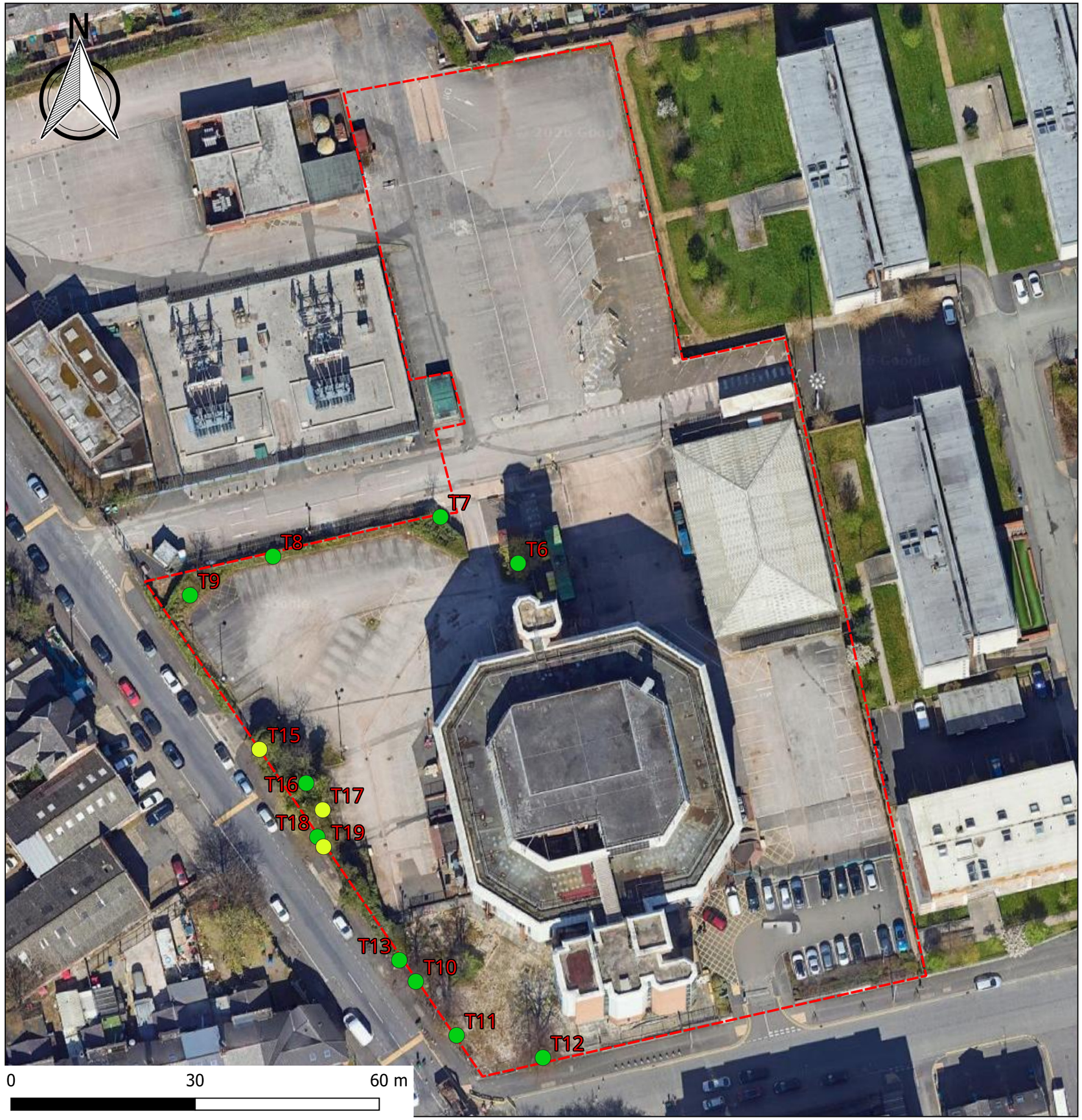
T12	European lime	Alive Mature	13/ 70	No PRFs identified.	None	N/A	Around the periphery of a car park.	Y	Y	7	
T13	Birch species *Betula* sp.	Alive Young	7/ 7.5	No PRFs identified.	None	N/A	Around the periphery of a car park.	Y	Y	8	
T15	Wild cherry *Prunus avium*	Alive Early mature	6/ 35	Dense ivy on the main stem. The main stem is still visible beneath the ivy such that it is not obscuring PRFs, but the stems of the ivy are thick such that it provides a feature for individual / low numbers of bats.	PRF	PRF-I	Around the periphery of a car park.	Y	Y	9 and 17	Feature requires soft-felling or pre-commencement inspection.
T16	Wild cherry	Alive Early mature	9/ 40	No PRFs identified.	None	N/A	Around the periphery of a car park.	Y	Y	10	

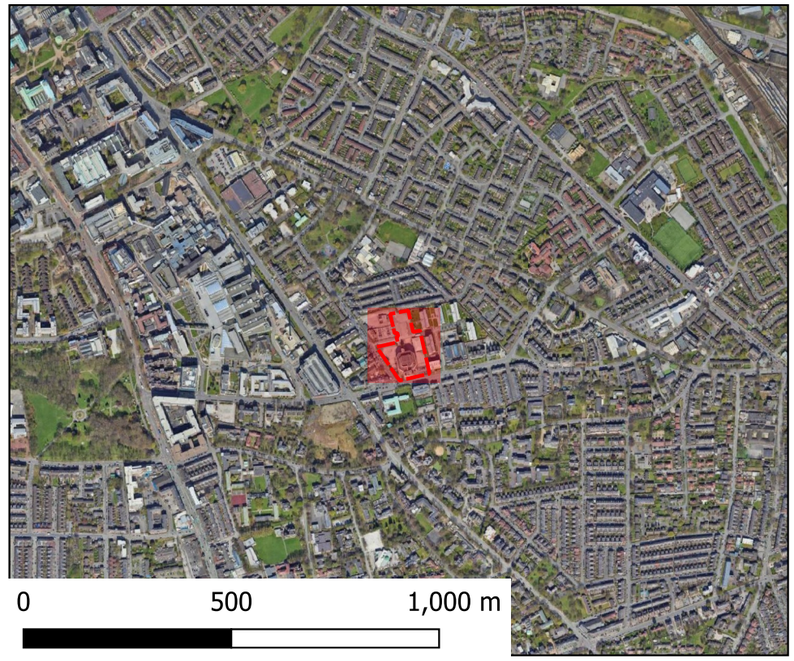
T17	Sycamore	Alive Early mature	12/ 50	Dense ivy on the main stem. The main stem is still visible beneath the ivy such that it is not obscuring PRFs, but the stems of the ivy are thick such that it provides a feature for individual / low numbers of bats.	PRF	PRF-I	Around the periphery of a car park.	Y	Y	11 and 18	Feature requires soft-felling or pre-commencement inspection.
T18	Silver birch *Betula pendula*	Alive Early mature	15/ 35	No PRFs identified.	None	N/A	Around the periphery of a car park.	Y	Y	12	
T19	Silver birch	Alive Young	7/ 15	Dense ivy on the main stem. The main stem is still visible beneath the ivy such that it is not obscuring PRFs, but the stems of the ivy are thick such that it provides a feature for individual / low numbers of bats.	PRF	PRF-I	Around the periphery of a car park.	Y	Y	13 and 19	Feature requires soft-felling or pre-commencement inspection.

Appendix 2 – Tree plan

Tree Survey Results

Site: Octagon House, Rusholme
NGR: SJ 85613 95962
Author: Mark Halliwell
Date: 13/08/2026





Key

- Trees assessed as 'None'
- Trees assessed as PRF-I

MAP DATA FROM ©2026 GOOGLE, IMAGERY FROM ©2026 GOOGLE

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Appendix 3 – Photographs



Photo 1. Tree 6, a semi-mature field maple.



Photo 2. Tree 7, a semi-mature sycamore.



Photo 3. Tree 8, a group of young scrubby specimens demarcating the car park boundary.



Photo 4. Tree 9, a semi-mature pedunculate oak.



Photo 5. Tree 10, a mature lime tree.



Photo 6. Tree 11, a mature lime tree.



Photo 7. Tree 12 a mature lime tree.



Photo 8. Tree 13, a young birch tree.



Photo 9. Tree 15 an early mature cherry tree



Photo 10. Tree 16, an early mature cherry tree.



Photo 11. Tree 17, an early mature sycamore.



Photo 12. Tree 18, an early mature silver birch.



Photo 13. Tree 19, a young silver birch within group G019.



Photo 14. Feature 11.1, a superficial knot hole.



Photo 15. Close up of feature 11.1, a superficial knot hole.



Photo 16. A close up of feature 11.2, a superficial knot hole.



Photo 17. A close up of feature 15.1, dense ivy on the main stem.



Photo 18. A close up of feature 17.1, dense ivy on the main stem.



Photo 19. A close up of feature 19.1, dense ivy on the main stem of T19.

Appendix 4 – External lighting guidance

Lighting scheme in relation to bats

The two most important features of street and security lighting with respect to bats are:

1. The UV component. Low or zero UV installations are preferred to reduce attraction of insects to lighting and therefore to reduce the attraction of foraging bats to these areas.

2. Restriction of the area illuminated. Lighting must be shielded to maintain dark areas, particularly above lighting installations, and in many cases, land adjacent to the areas illuminated. The aim is to maintain dark commuting corridors for foraging and commuting bats. Bats avoid well lit areas, and these create barriers for flying bats between roosting and feeding areas.

UV characteristics:

Low

- Low pressure Sodium Lamps (SOX) emit a minimal UV component.
- High pressure Sodium Lamps (SON) emit a small UV component.
- White SON, though low in UV, emit more than regular SON.

High

- Metal Halide lamps emit more UV than SON lamps, but less than Mercury lamps
- Mercury lamps (MBF) emit a high UV component.
- Tungsten Halogen, if unfiltered, emit a high UV component
- Compact Fluorescent (CFL), if unfiltered, emit a high UV component.
- Variable
- Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) have a range of UV outputs. Variants are available with low or minimal UV output.
- Glass glazing and UV filtering lenses are recommended to reduce UV output.

Street lighting

- Low-pressure sodium or high-pressure sodium must be used instead of mercury or metal halide lamps. LEDs must be specified as low UV. Tungsten halogen and CFL sources must have appropriate UV filtering to reduce UV to low levels.
- Lighting must be directed to where it is needed and light spillage avoided. Hoods must be used on each lamp to direct light and contain spillage. Light leakage into hedgerows and trees must be avoided.
- If possible, the times during which the lighting is on overnight must be limited to provide some dark periods. If the light is fitted with a timer this must be adjusted to reduce the amount of 'lit time' and provide dark periods.

Security and domestic external lighting

The above recommendations concerning UV output and direction apply. In addition:

- Lighting should illuminate only ground floor areas. Light should not leak upwards to illuminate first floor and higher levels.
- Lamps of greater than 2000 lumens (150 W) must not be used.
- Movement or similar sensors must be used. They must be carefully installed and aimed, to reduce the amount of time a light is on each night.
- Light must illuminate only the immediate area required, by using as sharp a downward angle as possible. Light must not be directed at or close to bat roost access points or flight paths from the roost. A shield or hood can be used to control or restrict the area to be lit.
- Wide angle illumination must be avoided as this will be more disturbing to foraging and commuting bats as well as people and other wildlife.
- Lighting must not illuminate any bat bricks and boxes placed on buildings, trees or other nearby locations.

Taken from the Bat Conservation Trust