

Roosting Bat and Nesting Bird Method Statement

Introduction

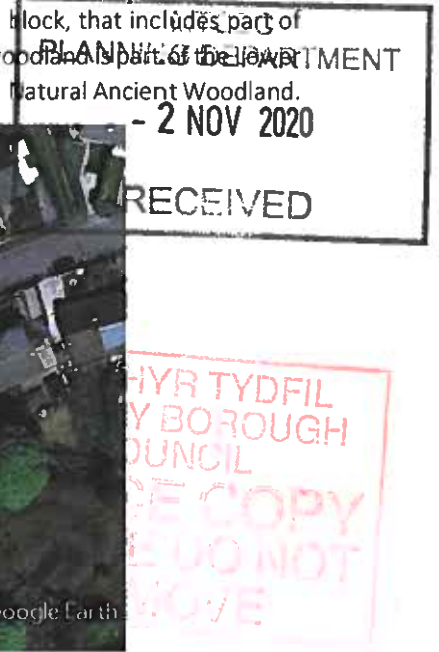
The tree in question is a large beech (see yellow circle, Figure 1 and also Figure 2), which is found at the western end of Westwood Drive, Treharris and the eastern edge of a broadleaved woodland block, that includes part of the wooded river corridor of the Afon Taf. Tree grid reference: ST 09121 96575. The woodland is part of the lower Taf & Edwardsville SINC (Site of Importance for Nature Conservation) and is also Semi Natural Ancient Woodland.



Figure 1 – Position of mature beech (yellow circle).



Figure 2 – Mature beech (Westwood Drive) looking south.



NB the tree is also covered by a Woodland Tree Protection Order and so any works to the tree will require an application to MTCBC Planning Department (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990).

Limitations

The beech was inspected from the ground on 24th July 2020 by the MTCBC Ecologist (Matt Davies). The tree was in full leaf making visibility difficult regarding sighting of Potential Roost Features (PRFs).

Results

Notwithstanding this limitation, there were several PRFs within the tree visible from the ground. For example, knot holes (mostly on main trunk, but smaller examples on limbs), welds (where branches are crossed and partially fused), peeling bark etc. See Figures 3 and 4 for examples. The tree is classed as having **moderate** potential suitability for roosting bats (Collins, 2016¹).

NB no nests were observed during the brief ground assessment during the site visit on the 24th July 2020.

¹ ■ Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.



Figure 3 – PRF example (small, dead limb).



Figure 4 – PRF example (weld).

Proposed works

The proposed works comprise removal of hung up branches, and small, dead limbs limited to the eastern half of the tree. Basically, this will be crown thinning – removal of selected branches (e.g., dead, weak branches) from the crown of the tree to improve the balance and let more light through. The tree in question has a lopsided growth because of its position at the woodland edge. These works will balance the tree to better ensure the health and longevity of the specimen.

Legislation

There are certain legal obligations regarding the felling of trees in terms of protected species, in particular bats and nesting birds. For information please see Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Legislation in relation to bats and nesting birds.

BATS <i>All British bats are classed as European Protected Species and therefore receive protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, making it an offence inter alia to:</i> <i>1. Deliberately kill, injure, or capture a bat;</i> <i>2. Deliberately disturb bats;</i> <i>3. Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat.</i> <i>In addition, all British bats are also listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which contains further provisions making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:</i> <i>1. Obstruct access to any structure or place which any bat uses for shelter or protection; or</i> <i>2. Disturb any bat while occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.</i> NESTING BIRDS <i>In the UK, the provisions of the Birds Directive are implemented through the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected it an offence to:</i> <i>1. kill, injure, or take any wild bird;</i> <i>2. take, damage, or destroy the nest of any such bird whilst it is in use or being built; or</i> <i>3. take or destroying an egg of any such wild bird.</i> <i>The law covers all species of wild birds including common, pest or opportunistic species.</i> <i>Special protection against disturbance during the breeding season is also afforded to those species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act.</i>
--

Method statement

The arboriculturalist will work to the following basic method statement.

BATS: Where limbs have PRFs they will only be removed if the whole of the depth of the feature is clearly visible and no bats or signs of bats are encountered. Where there is a feature not fully visible and the absence of bats cannot be guaranteed, the limbs will not be removed until such time as the feature can be endoscoped and fully investigated by a suitably qualified and licenced bat ecologist.

NESTINGS BIRDS: Ideally, works will take place outside of the bird nesting season. In the event that clearance work has to be undertaken during the nesting season (generally from 1st March until 31st August, although birds are known to nest outside of these dates in suitable conditions), a pre-commencement nesting bird check will be required and must be carried out by a suitably qualified person. Any active nests identified should be protected

until the young have fledged. Where a Schedule 1 species (as defined in the Wildlife and Countryside Act - <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-3614>) is involved, compensation for impacts, e.g., loss of nesting sites, should be devised and implemented.

