

Preliminary Roost Assessment

Survey site:

7 Kings Street, Gravesend, Kent DA12 2EB

Client:

Bashir Ali

Survey date:

2nd December 2024 - The survey results and recommendations contained within this report are valid for 18 months. An updated site visit may be required if the report is to be used any longer than 18 months after completion.

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with the Gravesham Borough Council. The proposal is described as:

Conversion of first, second and third floors offices to provide three single occupancy, studio flats.

[Unsubmitted]

PRA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: [PRA Methodology and Legislation - 2024](#).

The site survey was undertaken by Vicki Breakell BSc (Hons), Graduate Ecologist, an ecologist with 10 years' experience with specialist knowledge of water voles and hazel dormice. Accredited on Natural England survey licences for bats (class 1) [2018-33540-CLS-CLS] and dormice (class 1) [2019-39308-CLS-CLS]					
Date of survey	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (km/h)	Rain
02/12/24	9	56	50	10	None
PRA Survey Factor		Detailed using desk study and site survey. Any specific limitations noted within relevant section. This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.			
See PRA plan in Appendix 1, location plan in Appendix 2, proposed plans in Appendix 3 and photos in Appendix 4.					
Background and Site Location					
Summary of site and desk Study		Site context The site is centred on National Grid Reference TQ6480974169 and has a total area of 0.01ha, including the main property, with a sealed surface garden. It is situated on Kings Road, ~45m to the east of the High Street of Gravesend. Aerial imagery shows the local landscape to consist of roads, commercial and residential properties. The site is ~ 300m to the south of the River Thames and the nearest greenspace exists within St. Georges Church grounds ~130m to the west, but is separated from the site by the Highstreet, commercial properties and roads. Riverside Leisure Area exists ~450m to the east of the site and consists of a lake, trees and grassland. This is separated from the site by roads, commercial and residential properties. The greenspace areas within the vicinity may provide moderate foraging and commuting qualities for bats, but is not connected to the site.			

	Local notable habitats Parcels of mudflats are present within 2km of to the site with the nearest ~250m north but is separated from the site by a series of roads and commercial and residential properties. Parcels of coastal saltmarsh are present within 2km with the nearest being ~1km north, but located across the River Thames. Parcels of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh exist in close proximity, with the nearest located 1.1km north across the River Thames. Parcels of deciduous woodland exists within close proximity with the nearest located ~440m to the east within the Riverside Leisure Area, however this is not connected to the site due to the roads, residential and commercial properties. Designations The site is not subject to any designation and there are no known statutory sites within 2km. However, there are three National Network sites within 10km of the site. - <u>Thames Estuary Marches (Ramsar, SPA)</u>, located ~2.5km east and designated for “the habitats support internationally important numbers of wintering waterfowl, and the saltmarsh and grazing marsh are of international importance for their diverse assemblages of wetland plants and invertebrates. The site performs important hydrological functions, including shoreline stabilisation, sediment trapping, flood water storage and desynchronization of flood peaks, and maintenance of water quality by removal of nutrients. Human uses include yachting, angling, wildfowling (seasonal), jet skiing, waterskiing, and birdwatching; disturbance from some of these is a current issue but is being addressed through negotiation and awareness-raising.” Ramsar.org - <u>North Downs Woodlands (SAC)</u>, located 8.9km south and designated for:
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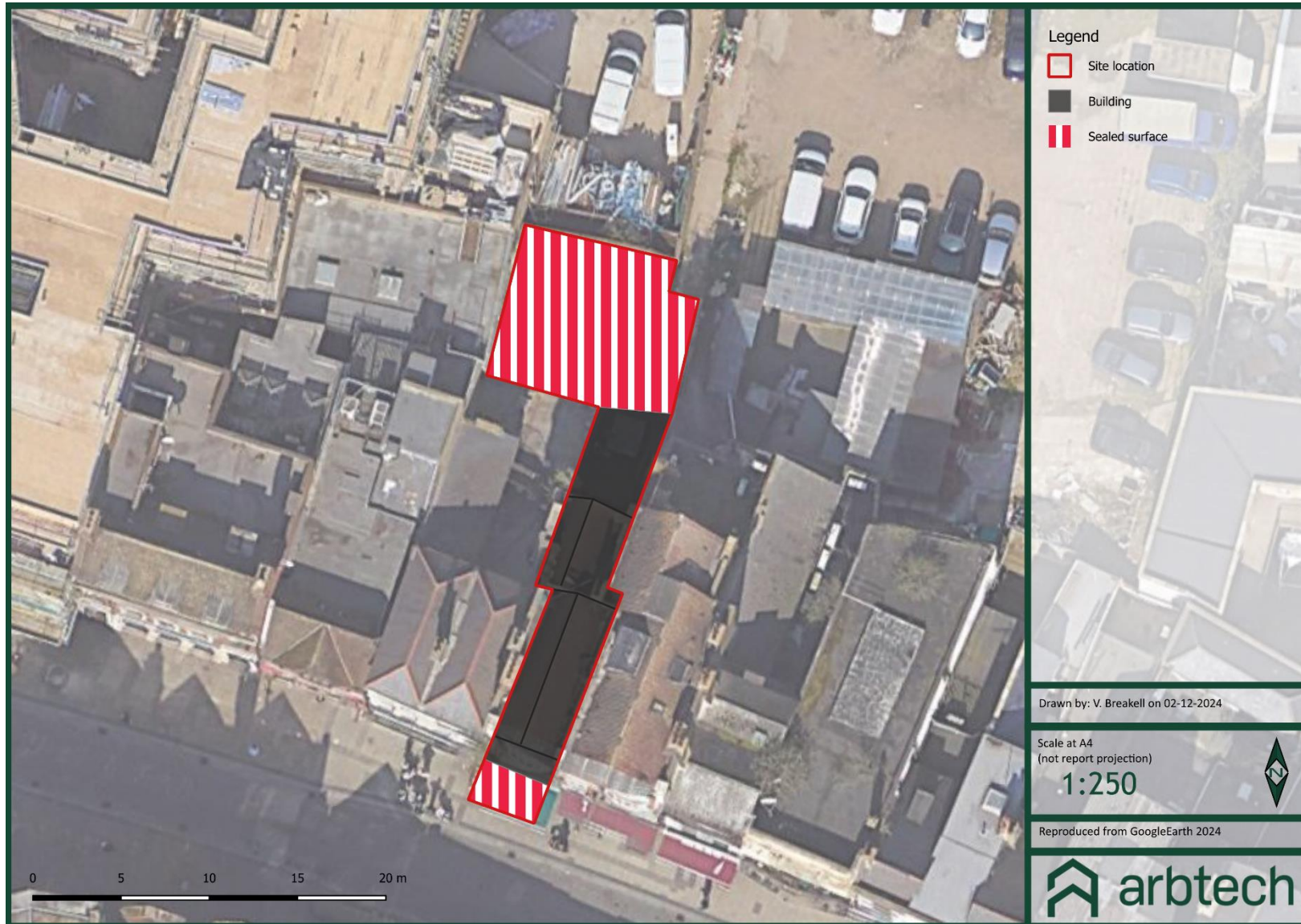
	- 9130 <i>Asperulo-Fagetum</i> beech forests. This site consists of mature <i>Asperulo-Fagetum</i> beech forests and also yew 91J0 Yew <i>Taxus baccata</i> woods on steep slopes. The stands lie within a mosaic of scrub and other woodland types and are the most easterly of the beech woodland sites selected. Parts of the woods were affected by the Great Storm of 1987. - 91J0 <i>Taxus baccata</i> woods of the British Isles* Priority feature - Yew <i>Taxus baccata</i> woodland at this site is associated with 9130 <i>Asperulo-Fagetum</i> beech forests, scrub and small areas of unimproved grassland on thin chalk soils. Where the shade is not too dense dog's mercury <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> predominates in the ground flora. The site is the most easterly of those selected. Jncc.gov.uk The site lies within the impact risk zone of several Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the closest of which being South Thames Estuary and Marches, situated ~2.2km east. The proposed conversion of first, second and third floor offices to provide three single occupancy studio flats is listed as having a likely significant effect on the qualifying features of the European Sites through increased recreational pressure. The local authority has measures in place to manage these potential impacts through a strategic solution. Providing the appropriate assessment concludes that the measures can be secured, it is likely that Natural England will be satisfied. EPSL data A search of the magic.gov.uk database for granted EPSLs within a 2km radius of the site has been completed. The MAGIC data revealed no granted EPSL's within 2km of the site.
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	Background No previous ecological reports have been prepared for the site, to the authors knowledge.
Field survey results	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	B1 is a four-storey town house style building, with a shop on the ground floor, which is largely derelict above the shop level. Constructed from brick and block with a small flat roof section to the front (south) and rear (north). The entirety of the roof adjoining the fourth floor was not visible from ground level due to the height and orientation of the building, a small visible section confirmed the presence of clay tiles. Aerial imagery shows the roof structure to consist of a central ridgeline. A small section of hanging tiles exists on the south elevation, surrounding a window into the roof space. One gap was observed from ground level with the majority seen to be well fitted. The rear (north) elevation consists of 5 boarded windows and an adjoining metal staircase that services the attached neighbouring property. The interior consisted of exposed internal stud walls, brickwork, exposed joists and floorboards, with no enclosed loft spaces present. In places the pitch of the roof could be observed from the second floor which appeared to comprise bitumen felt lining in good condition. The windows to the front (south) allowed for a high level of light ingress. The internal conditions were recorded as 8° and 57% humidity with the dimensions of the roof space being 13.7m long and 4m wide. No roosting bats or other field signs indicative of bat presence was observed, however the presence of bird faeces made observing field signs difficult. Access into the property exists through gaps in the wooden panels covering the windows as a number of feral pigeons were observed roosting within the property. The roof section consisted of wooden joists, with a lining and a window allowing light ingress is located at each end.

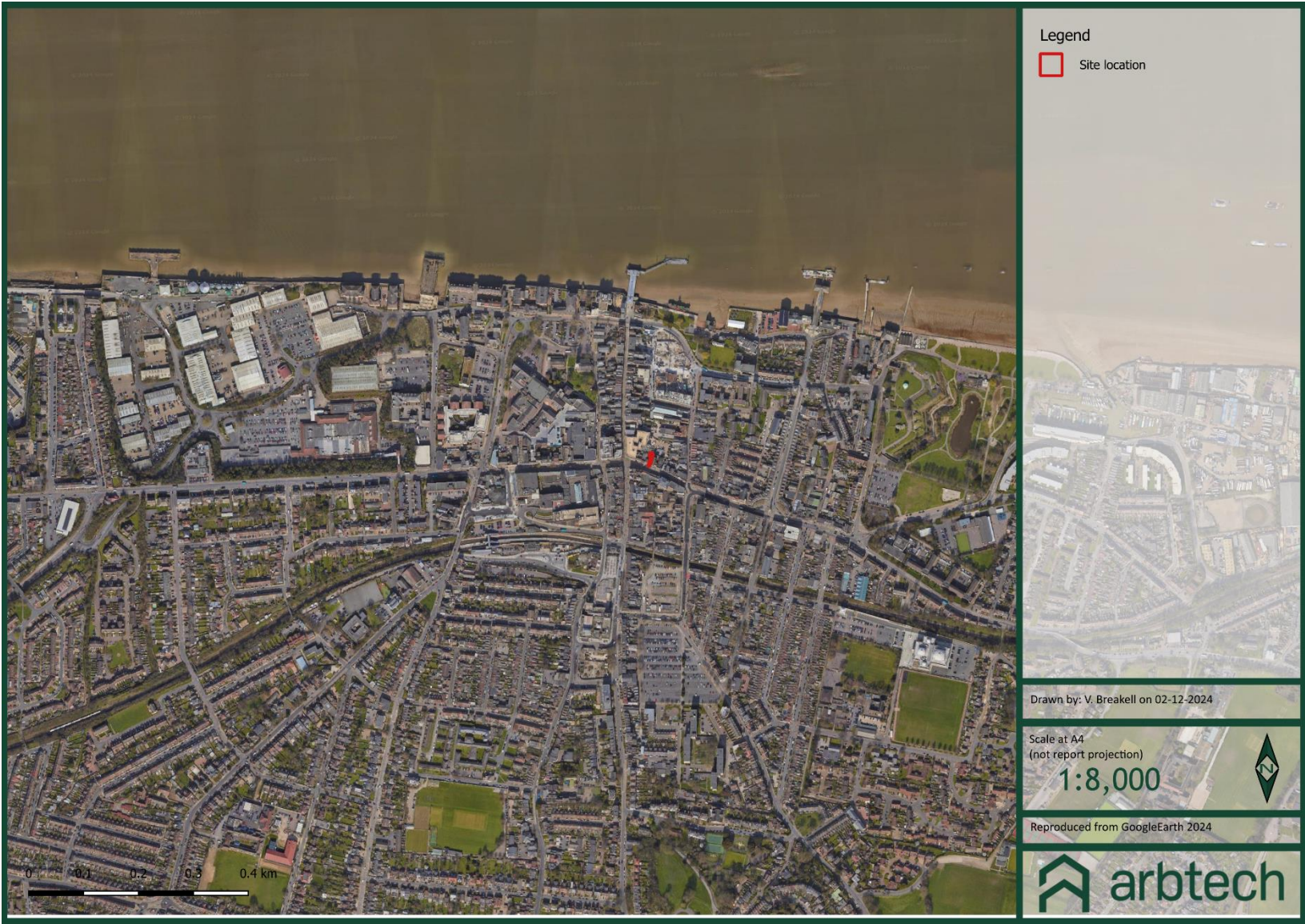
	There was an absence of foraging and commuting habitat onsite or within the immediate locality.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	The proposed development involves the conversion of the interior of B1 to 3 single occupancy studio flats. B1 is assessed as having negligible value for roosting bats. The interior is light and exposed providing sub-optimal thermal conditions for void dwelling bats. Furthermore, the high presence of feral pigeons may further reduce the likelihood of bats utilising the building. In addition, the exterior has limited roosting opportunities for crevice dwelling bats as only one gap was observed within a hanging wall tile, with the external roof structure to be retained in its current condition. The site context further limits the suitability of the building for roosting bats due to surrounding area consisting of built up residential and commercial properties, roads and a high level of disturbance by people. The limited commuting and foraging habitat in the vicinity and the absence of commuting habitat to the site further reduces the likelihood of bats utilising the building.
<i>Recommendations</i>	No further surveys required.
Trees – Ground Level Tree Assessment	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	No trees were recorded onsite.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	None foreseen
<i>Recommendations</i>	None
Nesting Birds	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	A high number of feral pigeons were observed utilising the building for roosting. No new/active nests were observed.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	The proposed development could result in the destruction or the disturbance and subsequent abandonment of active bird nests.

<i>Recommendations</i>	Any building or vegetation removal should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the vegetation should be undertaken immediately, by a qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged. Precautions should be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any retained nests so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during construction works. At least a 3-5m buffer should be created between any machinery and active nests until the young have fledged.
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Appendix 1: PRA plan



Appendix 2: Location map



Appendix 3: Proposed plan



Appendix 4: Photos*Figure 1: The south elevation (front)**Figure 2: 1 gap observed from ground level within the hanging tiles on the southern elevation.**Figure 3: The north elevation (rear)**Figure 4: The sealed surface to the rear of B1*

Figure 5: Kings Road*Figure 6: Shop on ground floor.**Figure 7: Internal roof void/space**Figure 8: Dead feral pigeons and faeces*

Limitations and Copyright

Limitations

A biological records data search has not been undertaken. To date, Arbtech has not been commissioned to obtain the data. Bat records can be acquired at a later date if needed and will be necessary for any subsequent license application to Natural England.

Due to the height and location of the property it was not possible to view all of the roof section from ground level.

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Version control			
Status	Issue	Name	Date
Draft	0.1	Vicki Breakell BSc (Hons), Graduate Consultant Accredited on Natural England survey licence for bats (class 1) [2018-33540-CLS-CLS]	02/12/2024
Proof	0.2	Hayley Roberts BSc (Hons), MSc, Natural England Licence holder for bats (Level 2), great crested newts and barn owl.	09/12/2024
Final	1.0	Vicki Breakell BSc (Hons), Graduate Consultant Accredited on Natural England survey licence for bats (class 1) [2018-33540-CLS-CLS]	09/12/2024