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## **Bat Report**

Proposed Strategic Housing Development,  
Northwood Crescent, Santry Demesne,  
Dublin 9'

24 March 2022



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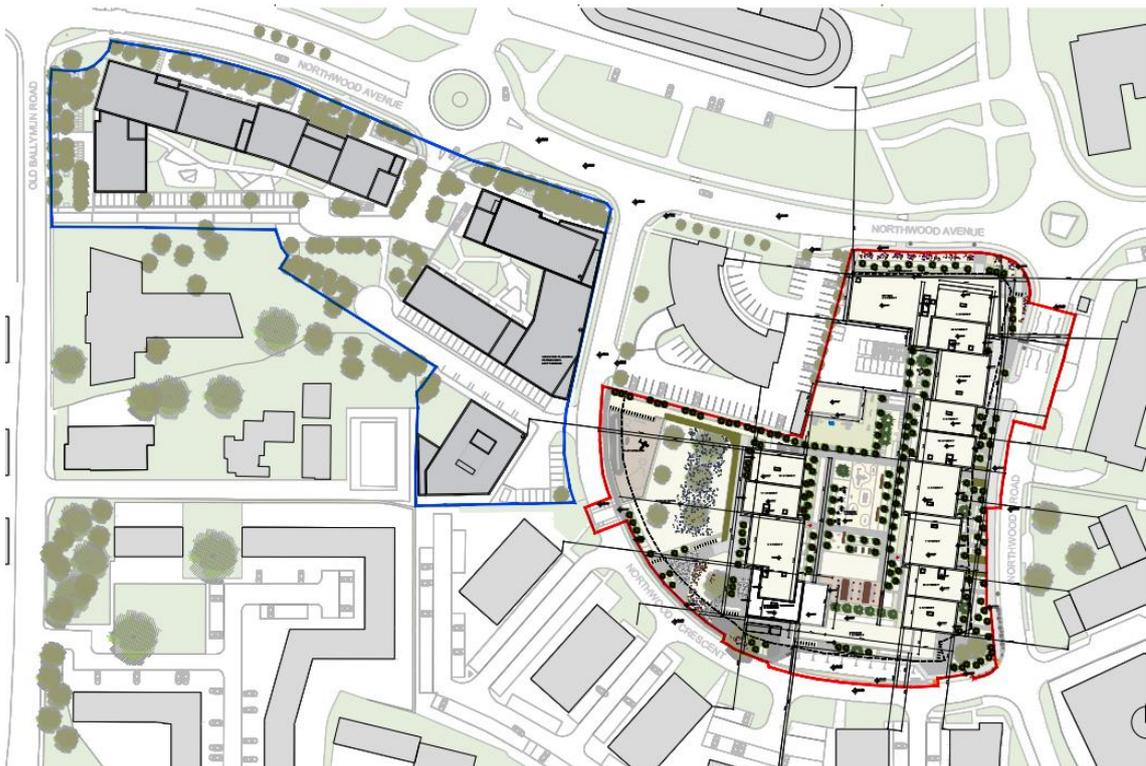
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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background to the assessment

As part of an Ecological Impact Assessment, NM Ecology Ltd was commissioned by RSK (Ireland) Ltd. on behalf of their client Kategale Ltd. to carry out a bat survey of the proposed development site at Northwood Avenue, Santry (Figure 1). It includes an inspection of potential roost features, and a survey of bat foraging / commuting activity throughout the site.



**Figure 1. Location and layout of the proposed development (red boundary)**

## 1.2 Statement of authority

This report was prepared by Nick Marchant, the principal ecologist of NM Ecology Ltd. He has fourteen years of professional experience, including eleven years as an ecological consultant, one year as a local authority biodiversity officer, and two years managing an NGO in Indonesia. He has an MSc in Ecosystem Conservation and Landscape Management from NUI Galway and a BSc in Environmental Science from Queens University Belfast. He is a member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, and operates in accordance with their code of professional conduct.

The survey was carried out by Eoin Cussen. He has three year's experience as a consultant ecologist, and a BSc and MSc from University College Cork. He regularly carries out bat surveys for development projects throughout Ireland.

### 1.3 Conservation and legal status of bats in Ireland

Bats are relatively common and widespread throughout Ireland, particularly in areas with woodland and water. In the red list of terrestrial mammal species (Marnell et al 2019<sup>1</sup>), all Irish bat species are listed as 'least concern', which means that they are "*widespread and common*" and "*do not qualify for Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable or Near Threatened status*" under IUCN criteria.

Nonetheless, in recognition of their vulnerability to development, all bats are afforded strict legal protection. Under the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011* (as amended) it is an offence to kill any protected animal, deliberately disturb them during breeding, rearing, hibernation or migration, or to damage / destroy a breeding site or resting place. Bats are also protected by the *Wildlife Act 1976* (as amended).

### 1.4 Methods

#### Bat surveying techniques

Survey methods were developed using *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines*<sup>2</sup>. Preliminary ground-level roost assessments were carried out for all trees to assess their suitability for roosting bats, using the methods in Section 6.2 of the BCT Guidelines. No potential bat roosts were found within the site boundary, so emergence / re-entry surveys were not considered necessary. After sunset, a transect survey of the site was carried out, which involved a continuous walk at a slow pace throughout the site, recording bats using a handheld detector (Anabat Walkabout, Titley Scientific Inc).

The survey was undertaken on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 2021, which was during the peak season of bat activity, and coincided with the maternity period, i.e. the birth and raising of offspring. Weather conditions at the time of survey were ideal for bats, with warm temperatures, light winds and no rain. Flying insects were abundant at dusk.

The survey area focussed on the patch of scrub and immature woodland in the south-western corner of the site. The brownfield portion of the site has little vegetation and is brightly illuminated by surrounding streetlights, so it is considered to have negligible value for foraging / commuting bats.

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<sup>1</sup> Marnell, F., Looney, D. & Lawton, C.(2019) Ireland Red List No. 12: Terrestrial Mammals. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of the Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Dublin, Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). *Bat surveys for professional ecologists: good practice guidelines* (3<sup>rd</sup> edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London

## **2 Development proposals**

### **2.1 Baseline description of the site**

The site is located in a suburban setting in the north of Dublin City. The eastern part of the site is brownfield, and contains artificial surfaces of concrete and asphalt, as well as dry meadows and recolonising bare ground. The southwestern part of the site contains bramble scrub, immature woodland and dry meadow.

### **2.2 Description of the proposed development**

Kategale Ltd. intends to apply for planning permission for the construction of a mixed-use development comprising a Build-To-Rent Strategic Housing Development, offices and all ancillary site development works on a site located at Northwood Crescent, Santry Demesne, Dublin 9.

This Strategic Housing Development consists of 268 No. residential units over 2 no. blocks ranging in height between 5 and 11 storeys (Block A to comprise of 54 no. 1-bedroom units and 44 no. 2-bedroom units; Block B to comprise 70 no. 1-bedroom units and 100 no. 2-bedroom units), office space comprising 2,868 sq. m Gross Floor Area over 3 storeys, a single storey creche (295 sq. m) and single storey resident's gym (145 sq. m) at podium level.

The proposed development will also consist of a single storey podium connecting blocks A and B and including undercroft car parking and rooftop garden / residential amenity space. The proposed development will also provide for ESB switch rooms and substations, generator room, utilities room, bin stores, water tank rooms, sprinkler tank room, bicycle stores, post room & building management office. The proposed offices will also include staff changing rooms, plant room and security office.

Ancillary site development works to include landscaping and public realm improvements, pedestrian crossings on Northwood Crescent and Northwood Road, children's play area, ground works and foul drainage, stormwater drainage, water supply, service ducting and cabling, public lighting, SUDS, and all boundary treatments. Vehicular access to the proposed development will be via a new entrance to Northwood Road.

## **3 Survey Results**

### **3.1 Preliminary roost inspection**

Three semi-mature oak trees were identified in the centre of the scrub / immature woodland, each of which had some small knotholes and rotting branches. They were considered to have low suitability for roosting bats.

No other trees were considered suitable for roosting bats. There are no buildings or any other potential roost features within the site boundary.

### **3.2 Results of bat survey**

The surveyor continuously circled the patch of scrub / immature woodland in the south-western corner of the site, occasionally walking through the centre of the patch.

Sunset was at 21:57. The first bat – a Leisler’s bat – was recorded at 22:22, approx. 25 minutes after sunset. It was commuting high above the site, and did not descend to forage near the scrub or immature woodland within the proposed development site. Over the next 30 minutes there was one pass by a common pipistrelle, one by another Leisler’s bat, and one by a soprano pipistrelle. All were commuting above the site, none were recorded foraging near the scrub or immature woodland. Over the remainder of the survey there were two other passes by commuting Leisler’s bats. Almost all passes were recorded on the western side of the scrub, only a single Leisler’s bat was recorded on the eastern side.

## **4 Conclusion**

Three bat species were recorded during the survey: common pipistrelles, soprano pipistrelles and Leisler’s bats. These are the three most-common bat species in Ireland, and represent the typical species assemblage for suburban sites.

Three trees within the site have low suitability for roosting bats. However, considering their low suitability rating, and the lack of bat activity near these trees during the dusk survey, the site has negligible importance for roosting bats.

Bat activity during the dusk survey was very low. All bats were commuting above the site, none foraged near the scrub / immature woodland habitat. On this basis, the site has negligible value for foraging bats.

The low levels of bat activity within the site are likely to be caused by light spill from surrounding areas. Bats are nocturnal animals, and most bat species avoid brightly-lit areas. There are streetlights along all surrounding roads: Northwood Park, Northwood Road and Northwood Avenue. The lights activated at 22:15, approx. 15 minutes after sunset, and before the first bat was recorded. At a larger scale, the site is surrounded on all sides by artificial light, which may reduce the commuting / dispersal opportunities to and from the site. In combination, the levels of artificial lighting in the surrounding area significantly reduce the suitability of the site and surrounding area for roosting and foraging bats.