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Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment

Survey site:

Avalon House, 72 Lower Mortlake Road, Richmond TW9 2JY

Client:

Barings Real Estate

Survey date:

27th March 2024

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application. The proposal is described as:

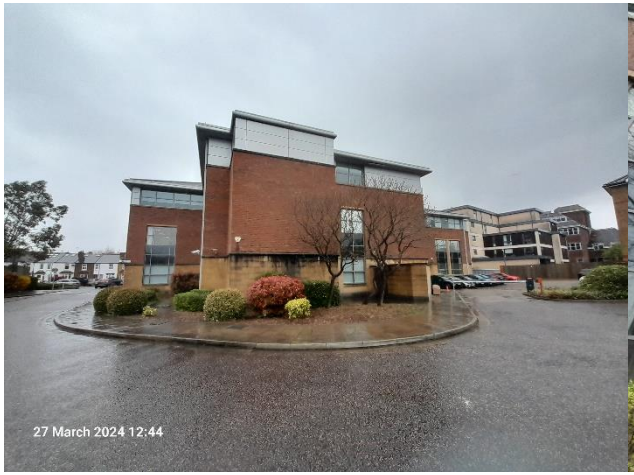
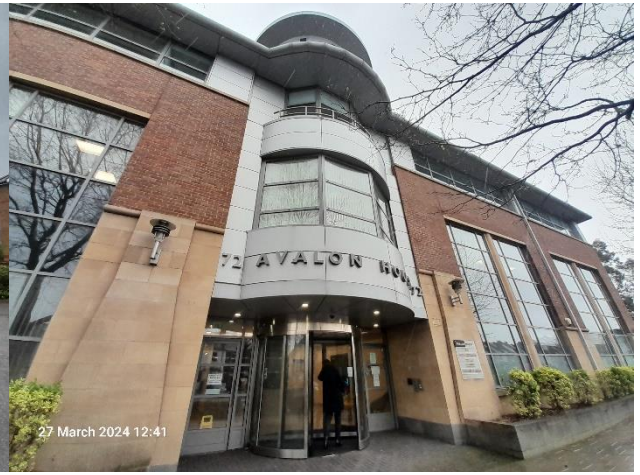
"Remove the existing roof, and construct a rooftop extension at the fourth floor, rear extensions to floors ground to four, provision of terraced amenity spaces to floors two to four, recladding and remodelling the façade and improvements to the Lower Mortlake Road entrance, landscaping improvements to the rear carparking area, provision of end of journey and cycle parking facilities, and associated building servicing and sustainability improvements."

PEA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: **PEA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.**

PRA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: **PRA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.**

The site survey was undertaken by Charlie Drapala BSc (Hons) AMRSB (Accredited Agent on Natural England Bat Licence Number: 2019-41480-CLS-CLS).					
Date of survey	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (mph)	Rain
27/03/2024	9	100	100	12	Moderate rain

Ecological Survey Factor **Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations**	**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.**
Habitats and plants (see habitat map in appendix 1, location plan in appendix 2, and proposed plans in appendix 3).	
Summary of Survey Findings **(***UKHab codes used)*	The site is located at National Grid Reference TQ 18530 75443 and has an area of approximately 0.3ha. The site consists of one large commercial building surrounded by tarmac and ancillary parking areas, with infrequent introduced shrubs. The site sits within the London Borough Richmond Upon Thames Council (LBRUT). The immediate context is predominantly residential and commercial. Although urban, there are tree lines connecting residential gardens across the immediate landscape. The wider area features extensive parkland habitat of Kew Gardens and Old Deer Park. <u>Building [u1b5]</u> There is one building within the site boundary. The building has been described in detail in the bat assessment section below.

	<u>Developed land, sealed surface [u1b]</u> The majority of the site consists of developed land, with sealed surfaces including car parking, and tarmac paving walkways. There are <10% vegetated areas which have sparse introduced shrubs, and two small young Japanese Cherry trees with no features. Therefore, this has limited ecological value.   The majority of the site is hardstanding with sparse vegetation (left) and the one commercial building (right).
Locality and Designated Sites	
Summary of Desk Study Findings	Richmond Park National Nature Reserve, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation is located ~1200m to the south. The park has a range of habitats of value to wildlife including ancient trees, diverse invertebrate populations and dry acid grassland. These habitats provide value to foraging and commuting bats. Syon Park SSSI is located ~1400m northwest. The SSSI is designated for tall wet grassland. This is of value to invertebrate populations which in turn provide value to foraging bats. Isleworth Ait Local Nature Reserve is located ~1750m west and has a vast canopy of mixed woodland, and some rare invertebrates, both of which provide value to foraging bats.

Foreseen Impacts	No impacts to designated sites or notable habitats are anticipated due to the distance of the proposed development from such sites (where known) as well as the urban location of the site with surrounding physical barriers. There are also no habitats of ecological value on site.
Recommendations	Best practice measures to minimise the possibility of pollution must be implemented during construction. <u>Enhancements</u> The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development: Planting of native shrubs and trees in the redeveloped car park to create foraging and sheltering opportunities for wildlife,
Bats	
Summary of Survey Findings	The site is characterised by buildings and hardstanding. There is minimal vegetation on site, and therefore the site has limited foraging habitat The wider landscape features parkland and deciduous woodland areas, suitable for foraging bats, although these are only connected to the site through residential gardens. The habitat is assessed as having **low** value for foraging and commuting bats. Displaced bats from licensed sites <2km away from the survey site will find alternative habitat either within the mitigation measures implemented as part of the licence or will relocate to other known roosts sites in close proximity to the licensed site. EPSL records for bats are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Granted EPSLs for bats within 2km of the site.

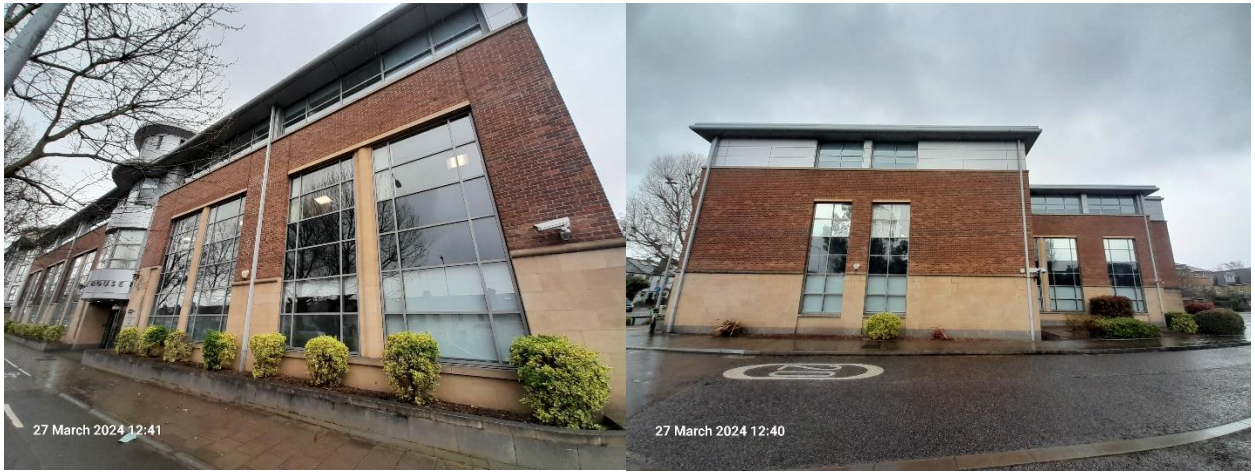
EPSL reference	Distance from site	Bat species affected	Impacts allowed by licence
2016-27025-EPS-MIT	~550m	Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and serotine	Damage of a resting place

2015-9916-EPS-MIT	~1100m	Soprano pipistrelle	Destruction of a resting place
2019-42630-EPS-MIT	~1700m	Soprano pipistrelle	Destruction of a resting place, destruction of breeding site

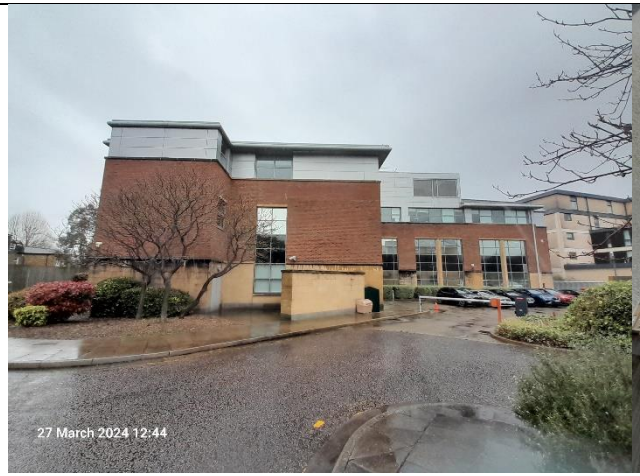
B1 is a three-storey commercial building, with a flat roof and sections of mono-pitched slate roof. The slat roof was inspected up close from the flat roof, and appears to be in good condition with no lifted tiles. There is no loft space. There are no eaves or soffits. The walls appear in good condition,

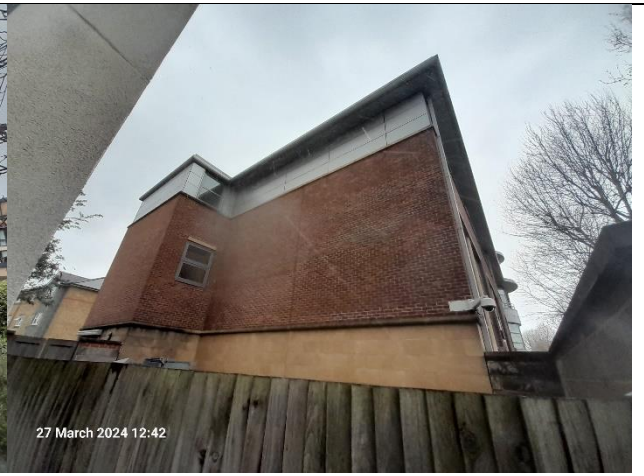
There is a few holes of missing mortar in the brickwork on the northern and southern elevation. These gaps provide crevices in which crevice dwelling bats could roost. There are no other features present which bats could use. If these features prove to be shallow and not suitable for roosting bats, the habitat value would reduce.

The external walls of the complex present no roosting opportunities for bats, or nesting opportunities for birds.

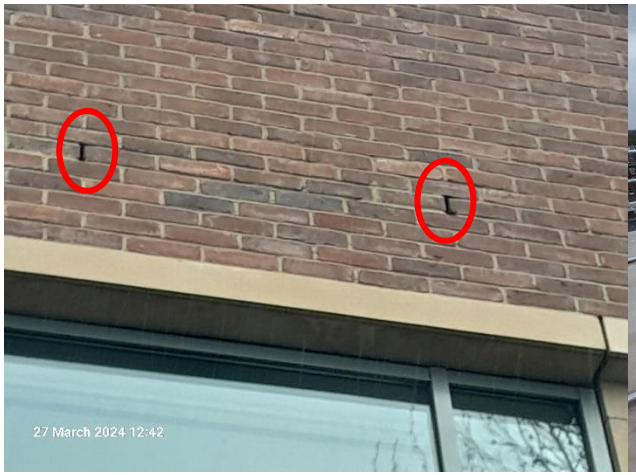


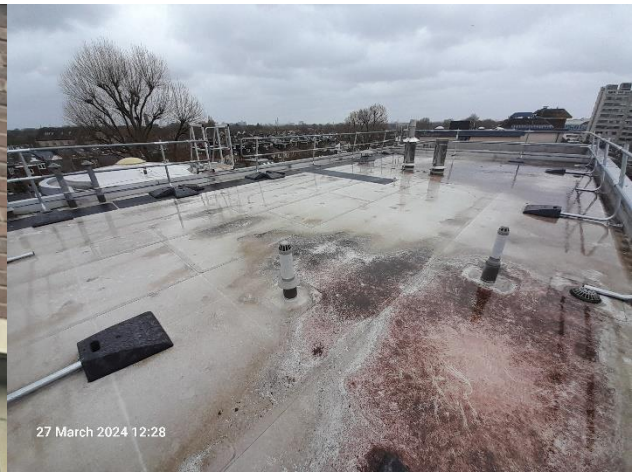
Northern (left) and western elevation (right).





Southern (left) and eastern elevation (right).





Gaps in the mortar which provide crevice habitat for bats (left) and the flat roof (right).

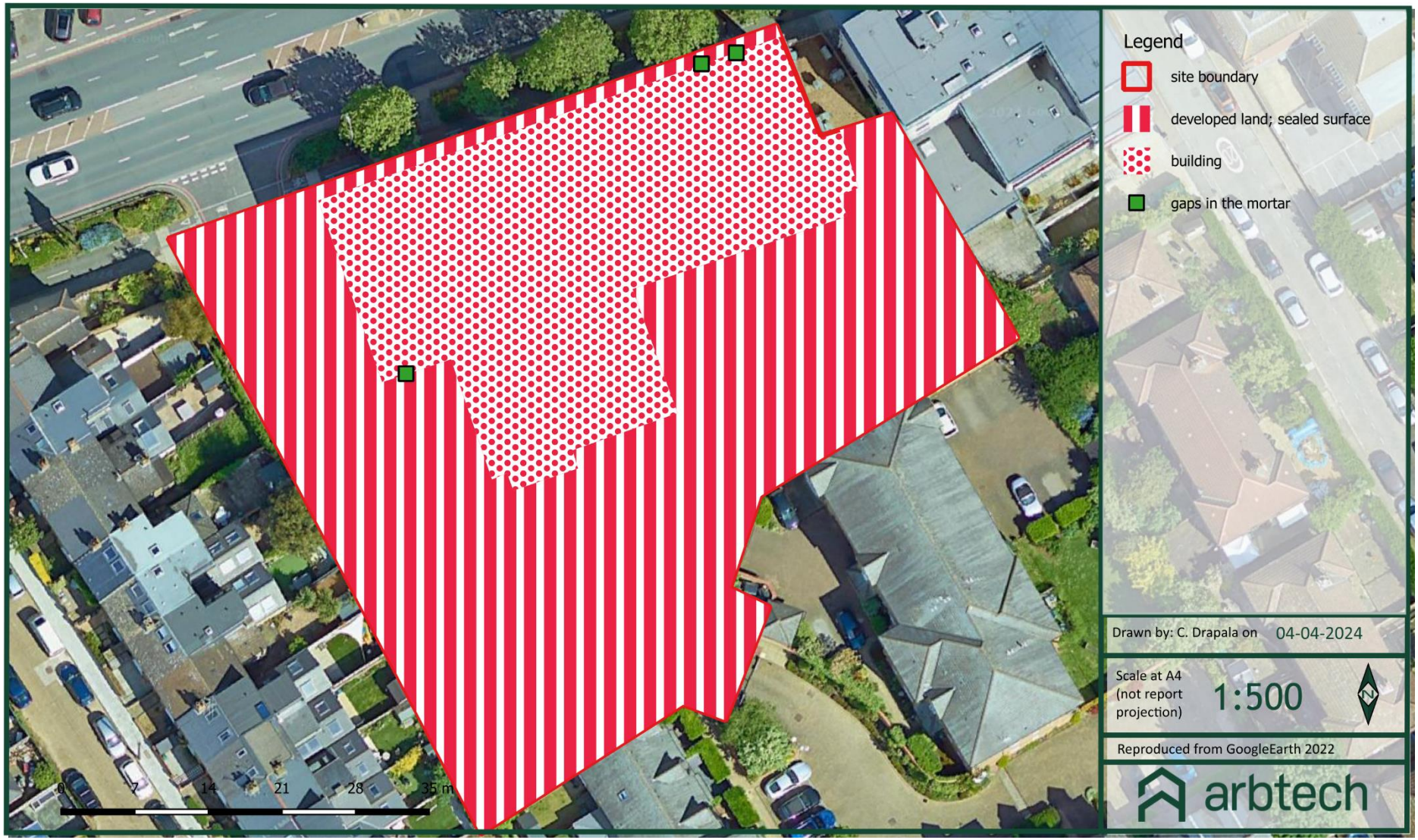
B1 is assessed as having **low** value for roosting bats due to the gaps in the mortar.

Foreseen Impacts	<u>Bat habitat – foraging and commuting</u> There are no habitats on the site which could be used by bats for foraging. However, bats could pass when dispersing from nearby roosts outside of the site. The proposed development will include the use of lighting which could spill on to bat roosting, foraging or commuting habitat and deter bats from using these areas. <u>Bat habitat – roosting</u> B1 has low value for roosting bats due to the gaps in the mortar which are features which could be suitable for crevice dwelling bats. The proposed development will result in the demolition of the upper storeys of the building. This could result in destruction of any bat roosts present and could cause disturbance, death or injury to bats.

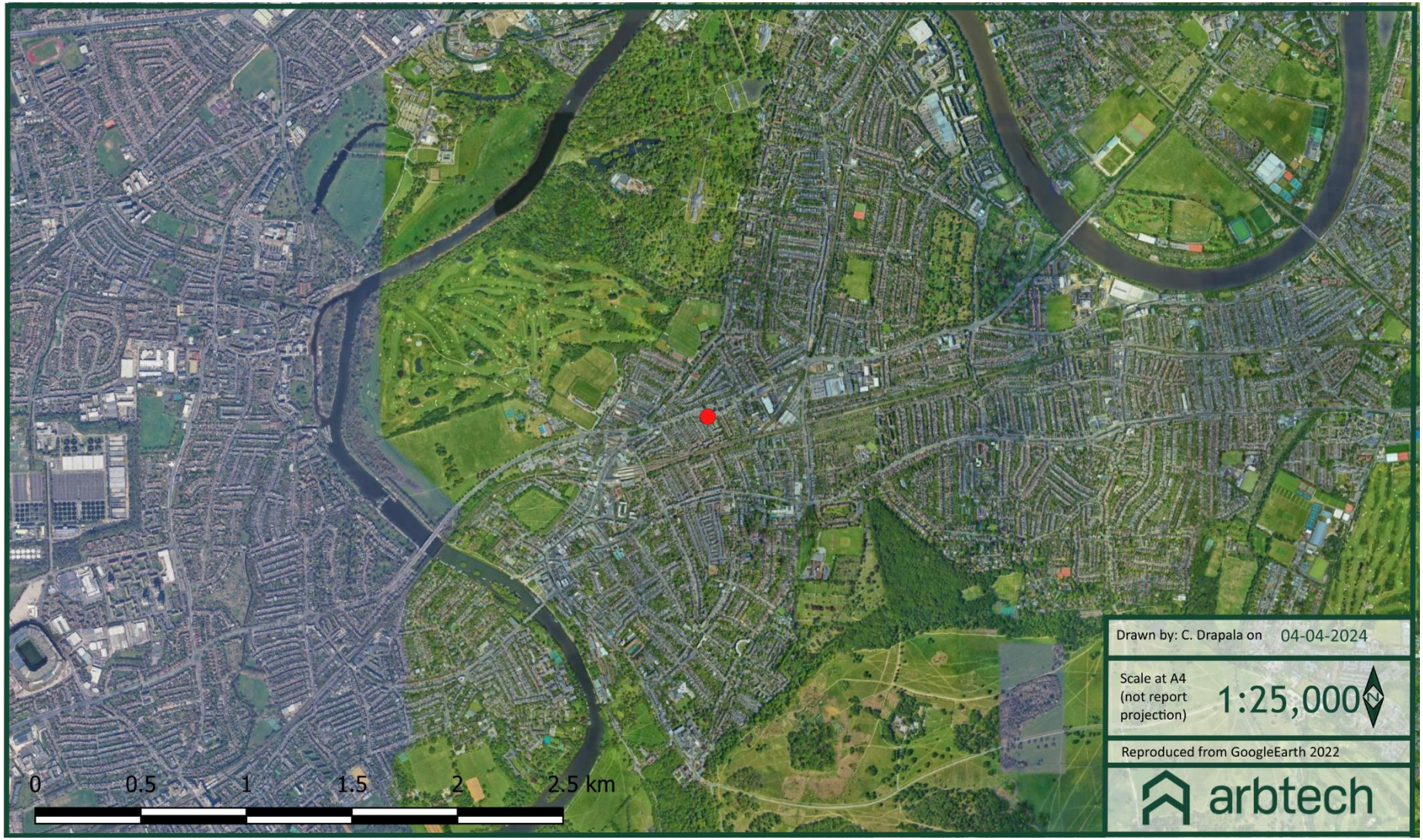
Recommendations	<u>Bat habitat – foraging and commuting</u> A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted within the proposed development. This should be designed in accordance with Guidance Note GN08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night (Institution of Lighting Professionals, 2023). Avoidance of light spill on to key habitats or features which bats could use for roosting, foraging or commuting. A luminaire specification which reduces the effects of light spill on bats should be chosen where feasible. The installation of physical screening features, and the use of dimming or part night lighting could also be considered, where appropriate. <u>Bat habitat – roosting</u> One bat emergence or re-entry survey is required during the active bat season (optimal May to August, suboptimal September) to confirm presence or likely-absence of a bat roost in the building. Five surveyors are required to provide full coverage of the bat suitable roosting features on the building. If the absence of a bat roost cannot be determined during the first visit, then further surveys will be required. If bat roosts are confirmed in the building two additional surveys may be required to characterise the roost and to inform an EPSL application to Natural England. Surveys should be a minimum of three weeks apart. The EPSL application requires that surveys have been undertaken within the most recent active bat season and planning permission must have been granted and all relevant wildlife-related conditions have been discharged prior to submission. Alternatively, the features can be fully inspected with an endoscope for bat suitability. This may require the use of a Mobile Elevated Working Platform. If the features inspected are found to be too shallow for bats too roost within, the habitat value will be negligible for bats, and no further surveys will be required. However, further survey may be required if the features are found to provide suitable habitat for bats.

	Enhancements To be confirmed upon completion of the further surveys.
Birds	
Summary of Survey Findings	No evidence of nesting birds was identified on or within B1, or elsewhere within the site boundary.
Foreseen Impacts	None.
Recommendations	Enhancements The installation of one peregrine nest box on the new roof of B1 (e.g. Vivara Pro Peregrine Falcon Nest Box or similar alternative brand) at the site would provide additional nesting habitat. Alternatively, a swift tower incorporating 20 swift nesting spaces could be installed to the rear of the site. This would be in the style of the Cambridge Swift Tower. Advice on the design of the tower can be sought from Action for Swifts.
All other protected species (badger, hazel dormouse, amphibians, reptiles, hedgehog, riparian mammals, invertebrates)	
Summary of Survey Findings	The site is not deemed to provide suitable habitat for these species or have suitable connectivity to areas of suitable habitat in the wider landscape. The risk to these species as a result of the proposed development is considered to be acceptably low.
Foreseen Impacts	No impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed development.
Recommendations	None.

Appendix 1: Habitat map



Appendix 2: Location map



Appendix 3: Proposed plan

Avalon House | Pre-Application

December 2023

PROPOSED ELEVATIONS

ELEVATIONS SOUTH & WEST

Proposed elevations

1 Proposed Elevation - South
1 : 100

2 Proposed Elevation - West
1 : 100

Avalon House | Pre-Application

December 2023

PROPOSED ELEVATIONS

ELEVATIONS NORTH & EAST

Proposed elevations

1 Proposed Elevation - North
1 : 100

2 Proposed Elevation - East
1 : 100

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Version control			
Status	**Issue**	**Name**	**Date**
Draft	0.1	Charlie Drapala BSc (Hons) AMRSB, Graduate Ecologist	04/04/2024
Proof	0.2	Nicole Gullan BSc (Hons) MRSB TechArborA, Senior Ecological and Arboricultural Consultant	05/04/2024
Final	1.0	Charlie Drapala BSc (Hons) AMRSB, Graduate Ecologist	05/04/2024