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BAT SCOPING SURVEY

At

Grove Court Hotel
Cleator
Cumbria
CA23 3DT

NGR: (NY) 301928 514060

Prepared for:	Mr Colin Benn
Written by:	Daniel Smith, UES Graduate Ecologist
Approved by:	Toby Hart, UES Managing Director

Date:	13th August 2020
UES reference:	UES03068/01

No evidence of roosting bats was found during the internal inspection, however a small number of scattered droppings were found during the external inspection, on a window on the southern aspect of the building. Furthermore, a number of potential roosting features were identified on the building, such as gaps in the brickwork and at the eaves.

Overall the building is considered to offer moderate potential to support roosting bats. Therefore, two further presence / absence surveys are required in order to determine whether or not bats are using the building to roost. The surveys should be undertaken by an appropriately licenced ecologist during the bat survey season, May to September (inclusive), with at least one survey undertaken between May and August (inclusive).

Further information will be provided within the bat scoping survey but in the meantime if you have any questions please don't hesitate to get in touch. Also, if you would like a quote for the further surveys please let me know and I will ask my colleague Jenny or Roy to send one across.

Kind regards,
Emily

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is written by Daniel Smith BSc, Graduate Ecologist at United Environmental Services Ltd (UES). It provides an assessment of the potential impacts on bats as a result of the proposed residential development at Grove Court Hotel, Cleator, Cumbria.

A bat scoping survey was undertaken on 4th August 2020. The objective of the survey was to establish the suitability of the building on site to support roosting bats, based on a site-specific survey and habitat assessment. The building was searched externally and internally (where accessible) for bat presence and features associated with bat activity, as detailed in Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidance (2016).

Grove Court Hotel is situated in an area which provides high quality habitat for bats. The ancient woodlands, hedges, grasslands and River Ehen will all provide excellent foraging opportunities, whilst the mature trees, agricultural buildings and villages will provide an abundance of suitable roosting opportunities. Furthermore, the connectivity between habitats in the local area is very good due to the presence of hedgerows, tree lines and poorly lit roads.

The quality of roosting habitats within the building is moderate, with a number of predominantly external potential roosting features (PRFs) such as gaps in boxed soffits, within the stonework, under raised roof slates and at the eaves of the building. PRFs internally within the building are limited.

A single possible roosting location was found during the scoping survey, under a gap at the wooden eaves on the eastern aspect of the original section of the building. Two fresh droppings were found which suggests that the roost has been recently used by single to low numbers of bats. Bats present are likely to be males, non-breeding females or juveniles. It is unlikely to be used as a hibernation or maternity roost.

Further bat presence / absence surveys comprising two survey visits are required in order to determine the species and numbers of bats using the building on site. These surveys should be undertaken by an appropriately licenced ecologist during the bat survey season, May to September inclusive. At least one of the surveys should be undertaken during the peak survey season of May to August inclusive.

Due to the potential presence of breeding birds within the building at the time of the development, it is recommended that the works take place outside of the breeding bird season and should not be undertaken from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible, a breeding bird nest check should be undertaken prior to the commencement of works by a suitably experienced ecologist, and an ecological clerk of works appointed if considered necessary.

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Author, surveyors and qualifications

This report is compiled and written by Daniel Smith BSc, UES Graduate Ecologist. Other surveyors include:

- Emily Clark BSc PGdip ACIEEM, UES Ecologist. Emily is licensed by Natural England to disturb, take and handle all species of bats under licence number 2019-39350-CLS-CLS (level 2).

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 July 2020 to conduct site surveys which include the following activities:

- Conduct internal and external building inspections to look for field signs of bats
- Assess the suitability of the building for use by roosting bats
- Recommend further surveys, mitigation and compensation, where appropriate

1.3 Proposed development

The proposed plans involve the demolition to the existing building and the construction of ten new residential dwellings with associated car parking and gardens.

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 to 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 assessed during a walkover survey and by studying aerial photographs, in order to gauge their suitability to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats.

2.2 Building survey

The building on site was searched both externally and internally for bat presence and features associated with bat activity, as detailed in BCT guidance (Collins, 2016). This was conducted on 4th August 2020 by Daniel Smith and Emily Clark.

2.2.1 External inspection

The external inspection of the building on site was carried out from ground level using binoculars, and also using ladders and an endoscope to investigate suitable gaps. The objective of the survey was to find and record any signs of bat use, for example:

- Bat droppings
- Feeding remains
- Grease staining / urine marks
- Corpses or skeletons

The bat signs listed above are visible from the outside of a building. The following areas were searched, where present:

- Roof and ridge tiles
- Lead flashing
- Eaves
- Boxed soffits
- Fascia and barge boards
- Windowsills and panes
- Walls
- Gaps under felt
- Cracks / holes in woodwork or behind cladding
- Gaps in brickwork and mortar
- Air bricks
- Grills
- Vents

2.2.2 Internal inspection

The internal inspection covered all of the accessible rooms and roof spaces within the building.

Bats regularly utilise specific areas within roof spaces, which were searched for any field signs of bats using high-powered torches and an endoscope, where considered necessary by the licenced ecologist. The following features were searched, where present:

- Roof beams and junctions

- Gaps under felt
- Dividing walls
- Chimney breasts
- Gaps in brickwork and mortar
- Cracks / holes in woodwork
- Floor or other surfaces on which droppings could accumulate

2.3 Survey limitations

It rained prior to and during the scoping survey and so evidence of bats may have been washed away on external features. However, evidence of bat activity in internal areas of the building and sheltered external locations would still have been present. Additionally, further bat presence / absence surveys will be undertaken to determine whether the building is being used by roosting bats. As such, this is not considered to be a significant limitation to the survey.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Habitat assessment

Grove Court Hotel is located within the village of Cleator, Cumbria, located approximately 1.5km from Cleator Moor and 2.8km from Egremont. The habitats on site include the hotel building and associated car parking and gardens.

The immediate surrounding area comprises silage and pasture fields, divided by a network of tree lines and hedgerows. To the north east is a large block of deciduous woodland, to the south east is a large block of coniferous woodland with a small strip of ancient replanted woodland and to the west lies a small deciduous woodland. These habitats will provide excellent foraging, commuting and roosting opportunities for bats in the local area.

In the wider surrounding area, the habitats are similar in composition; the landscape is a mosaic of hedge-lined fields, villages, and blocks of deciduous and coniferous woodland, intersected by poorly lit roads. A number of protected sites including the Lake District National Park (1.5km north east), River Ehen Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (0.2km east) and Clints Quarry SSSI (1.8km south west) are also in the wider area and contain high quality foraging, commuting and roosting habitats for bats such as waterbodies, woodland and watercourses.

3.2 Building survey

3.2.1 External inspection

The entire building is due to be demolished under the proposed development plans.

The original part of the recently disused hotel building is a single-storey stonewalled construction which dates to 1909. There is a two-storey stonewalled extension on the eastern aspect of the original section of the building. The extension wall is rendered on most aspects except for the southern aspect were the wall is not rendered. The original section of the hotel has a complexed roof construction which includes pitched and hipped roofs. The extension is of a pitched construction. The roof has slate roof tiles with clay ridge tiles. Most of the roof is in good condition however there are a few raised tiles on the western and northern aspect of the building which could be suitable for crevice dwelling bats (See Appendix 3 – Photographs 17 and 18). The chimneys on the hotel are in good conditions.

The windows are made of wood on the original building and uPVC on the extension. The uPVC windows are in good condition however, there are a few gaps around the wooden windows on the southern and northern aspect of the original section of the building that are suitable for crevice dwelling bats (Photographs 14, 15 and 20). There are gaps at the wooden boxed soffits on the eastern and western of the extension (Photographs 9 and 10). There are gaps along the wooden eaves of the building especially at the south eastern and northern sections (Photographs 11 and 19). Two bat droppings were found a windowsill below a gap in the eaves at the eastern aspect of the original building (Photograph 12). The stonework of the walls is in good condition, however, there are gaps in between stones were there is missing mortar on the southern aspect of the original build that can provide PRFs for bats (Photograph 13). There are also gaps between the coping stones on the southern aspect above the conservatory (Photograph 16). There are floodlights at the southern and western aspect of the building which causes this area of the building to be less suitable for roosting bats (Photographs 22 and 23).

There is also evidence of birds nesting within the building. Bird excrement was found under a gap of the wooden eaves on the northern aspect of the original section of the building (Photograph 21).

Two bat droppings were found at one location during the external building inspection.

3.2.2 Internal inspection

Internally the hotel is split into a number of loft spaces. These sections have been labelled and mapped on Appendix 1 – Site Plan.

Loft 1 – This is the loft spaces above the extension. The roof is of a trussed construction and is lined with bitumen felt. The walls are constructed of breezeblock which was evident on each gable end. There is no floor insulation and the loft space itself is quite draughty which made it cool internally. There are gaps between beams at the gable ends but no evidence of bats was found within the loft space. A low number of mouse droppings were found in the loft space.

Loft 2 – The roof is of a kingpost construction and is unlined. The chimney is tightly sealed. There are missing tiles and mortar within the loft which provide access points for bats. There is no floor insulation and the loft is very breezy and cool. There are many cobwebs within the loft, and it is very dusty. No evidence of bats was observed. A low number of mouse droppings were found within the loft space.

Loft 3 - The loft space could not be accessed directly; however, it could be seen via Lofts 2 and 5. The roof is of a trussed construction and is lined.

Loft 4 – This loft space has no ceiling as a result of a recent fire. The roof is of a rafter construction and is not lined. It is very draughty within the room and is considered to be unsuitable for roosting bats.

Loft 5 – The loft layout is very similar to Loft 2. The roof is of a kingpost construction and is mostly unlined. However, there is a section that is lined with modern breathable membrane (Photograph 28). There are some missing and lifted tiles which can provide access into the loft space. The loft has no floor insulation and is very draughty and quite cool internally. No evidence of bats was found within this loft space.

Loft 6 – This loft space was not accessible for the internal inspection. However, it was evident that the roof space was made up of a number of false ceilings (Photograph 29).

Cellar – The cellar is brick built. There are internal gaps into the wall cavity (Photograph 31). However, there are no clear potential bat access points into the cellar. The cellar was recently used to store beer kegs and drinks and was accessed frequently, reducing its suitability for bats. No evidence of bats was found, and it is considered to be unsuitable for use by bats due to the lack of access points.

No bat field signs were found during the internal building inspections.

4 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Evaluation of results

4.1.1 Qualitative assessment of foraging habitats

In summary, Grove Court Hotel is situated in an area which provides high quality habitat for bats. The ancient woodland, hedges, grasslands and River Ehen will all support high abundances of insects, on which bats can forage. Furthermore, the connectivity between habitats in the local area is excellent due to the presence of hedgerows, tree lines and poorly-lit roads.

4.1.2 Qualitative assessment of roosting habitats

The mature trees, agricultural buildings and villages in the local area will provide an abundance of alternative roosting opportunities for bats.

The quality of roosting habitats within the building on site is moderate, with a number of predominantly external PRFs such as gaps in boxed soffits, within the stonework, under raised roof slates and at the eaves of the building. PRFs internally within the building are limited.

One possible roosting location was found during the scoping survey. The roost (See Appendix 1 – Site plan) is located under a gap at the wooden eaves on the eastern aspect of the original section of the building. The low number of droppings suggest that this is a roost used by single to low numbers of bats. Bats are likely to be males, non-breeding females or juveniles. It is unlikely to be used as a hibernation or maternity roost.

4.2 Mitigation and compensation measures

4.2.1 Bats

One possible bat roost was found at Grove Court Hotel during the scoping survey, and there are other PRFs which remain suitable for use by roosting bats. Therefore, further presence / absence surveys comprising two survey visits are required in order to determine the species and numbers of bats using the building on site. These surveys should be undertaken by an appropriately licenced ecologist during the bat survey season, May to September inclusive. At least one of the surveys should be undertaken during the peak survey season of May to August inclusive.

The survey results will need to be submitted to the local planning authority (LPA) as part of the planning application. In addition, any further mitigation or compensation measures will need to be detailed in a bat method statement and submitted to and agreed with the LPA prior to a planning decision. It should be noted that it is likely that these further measures may include an application for a European protected species (EPS) mitigation licence or bat low impact class licence (BLICL) from Natural England, which can be completed once planning permission is granted.

4.2.2 Breeding birds

Due to the presence of breeding birds within the building, it is recommended that the works take place outside of the breeding bird season and should not be undertaken from March to

August inclusive. If this is not possible, a breeding bird nest check should be undertaken prior to the commencement of works by a suitably experienced ecologist and an ecological clerk of works appointed if considered necessary.

5 CONCLUSION

Grove Court Hotel provides low quality foraging and commuting habitats for bats in the local area but the building on contains several potential roosting features and has been assessed as having moderate potential to support roosting bats. It is also situated in an area which provides high quality habitat for bats, due to the abundance of potential roosting habitats and foraging opportunities.

One possible roosting location was found during the scoping survey, and there are other PRFs which remain suitable for use by roosting bats. Therefore, further presence / absence surveys comprising two survey visits are required in order to determine the species and numbers of bats using the building on site. These surveys should be undertaken by an appropriately licenced ecologist during the bat survey season, May to September inclusive. At least one of the surveys should be undertaken during the peak survey season of May to August inclusive.

Due to the potential presence of breeding birds within the building at the time of development, it is recommended that the works take place outside of the breeding bird season and should not be undertaken from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible, a breeding bird nest check should be undertaken prior to the commencement of works by a suitably experienced ecologist and an ecological clerk of works appointed if considered necessary.

Ecological assessments
Ecological assessments play an important part within the planning context; they include an initial assessment which highlights any specific interests of a site. From the initial site assessment, the surveyor assesses the suitability of habitats within the site to support protected species and makes recommendations for further survey works if required. The following paragraphs provide a brief interpretation of the legislative protection that is relevant to the findings of this report.

Bats
In the United Kingdom, all species of bat and their roosts are afforded full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the "Habitats Regulations"). The Wildlife and Countryside Act is the domestic implementation of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (the Bern Convention) and was amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture a bat
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection (even if the bat is not present at the time)
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any live or dead bat, any part of a bat or anything derived from a bat

Under UK law, a bat roost is *any structure or place which any wild [bat] ... uses for shelter or protection*. As bats often reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that a roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time of the activity taking place.

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

If an activity is likely to result in any of the above offences, a licence can be applied for to derogate from the protection afforded. These licences must provide appropriate mitigation and are issued by Natural England.

A Natural England mitigation licence application requires a Mitigation Method Statement and, in many cases, a Reasoned Statement of Application. The Mitigation Method Statement contains details of the proposed mitigation works. The Reasoned Statement needs to provide a rational and reasoned justification as to why the proposed development meets the requirements of the Conservation (National Habitats & c.) Regulations 1994, namely Regulations 44(2)(e), (f) or (g), and 44(3)(a).

The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) provides guidance on the interpretation of the law in relation to the natural environment and development.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 lists the following bat species as species of principle importance under Section 41:

- Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*
- Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*
- Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*
- Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*
- Brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*
- Greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*
- Lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*

Section 40 requires every public body in the exercising of its functions 'have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity' (all biodiversity and not just section 41 species and habitats); therefore making these bats a material consideration in the planning process and requiring a detailed ecological bat survey before planning permission can be granted.


Grove Court Hotel, Cleator
Wide aerial photograph
Site location

Photograph 31 – Gap into the wall cavity of the cellar.

Appendix 2 – Aerial photographs

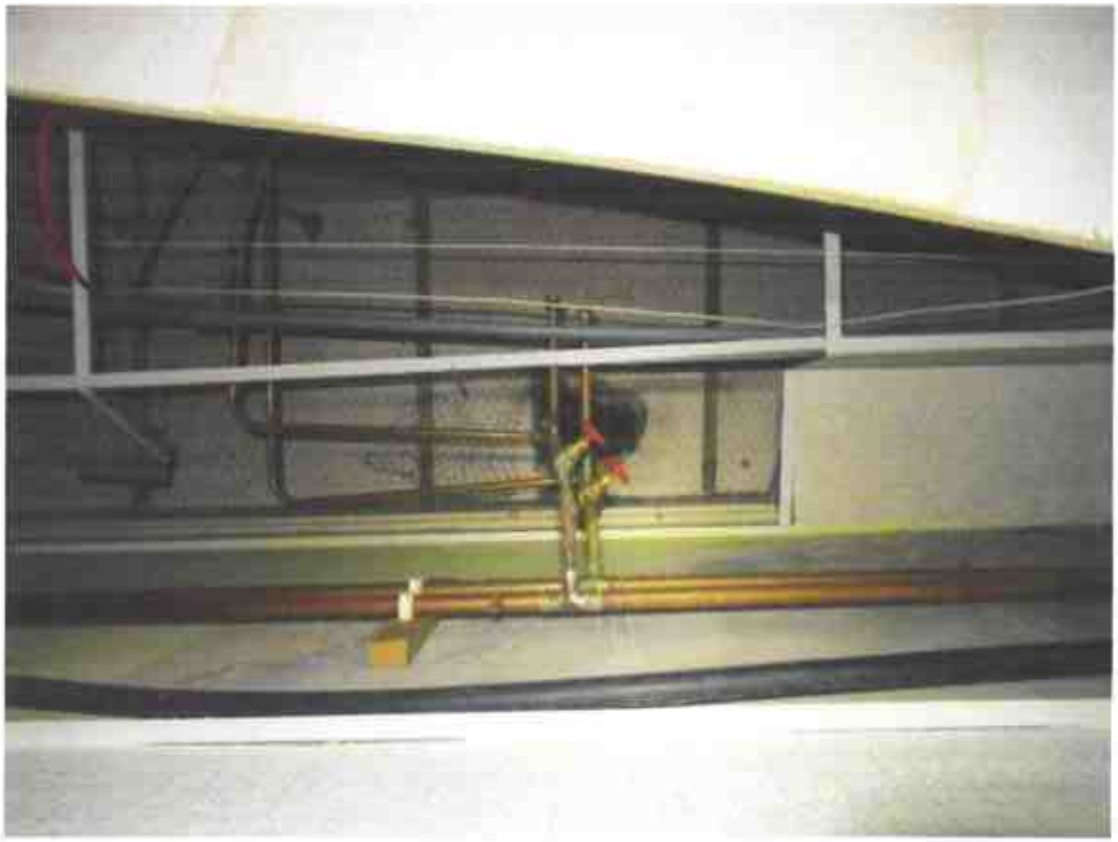

Grove Court Hotel, Cleator
Close aerial photograph
Development boundary
Map data © 2020 Google, Imagery © 2020

Photograph 17 – Raised roof tiles on the western aspect of the hotel.

Photograph 18 – Raised roof tiles on the northern aspect of the hotel.

Photograph 19 – Gaps under the wooden eaves on the northern aspect of the hotel.

Photograph 20 – Gap between the stonework and wooden window on the northern aspect of the hotel.



Photograph 29 – At least three layers of false ceiling that leads to Loft 6.

Photograph 30 – Cellar within the hotel.

6 REFERENCES

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

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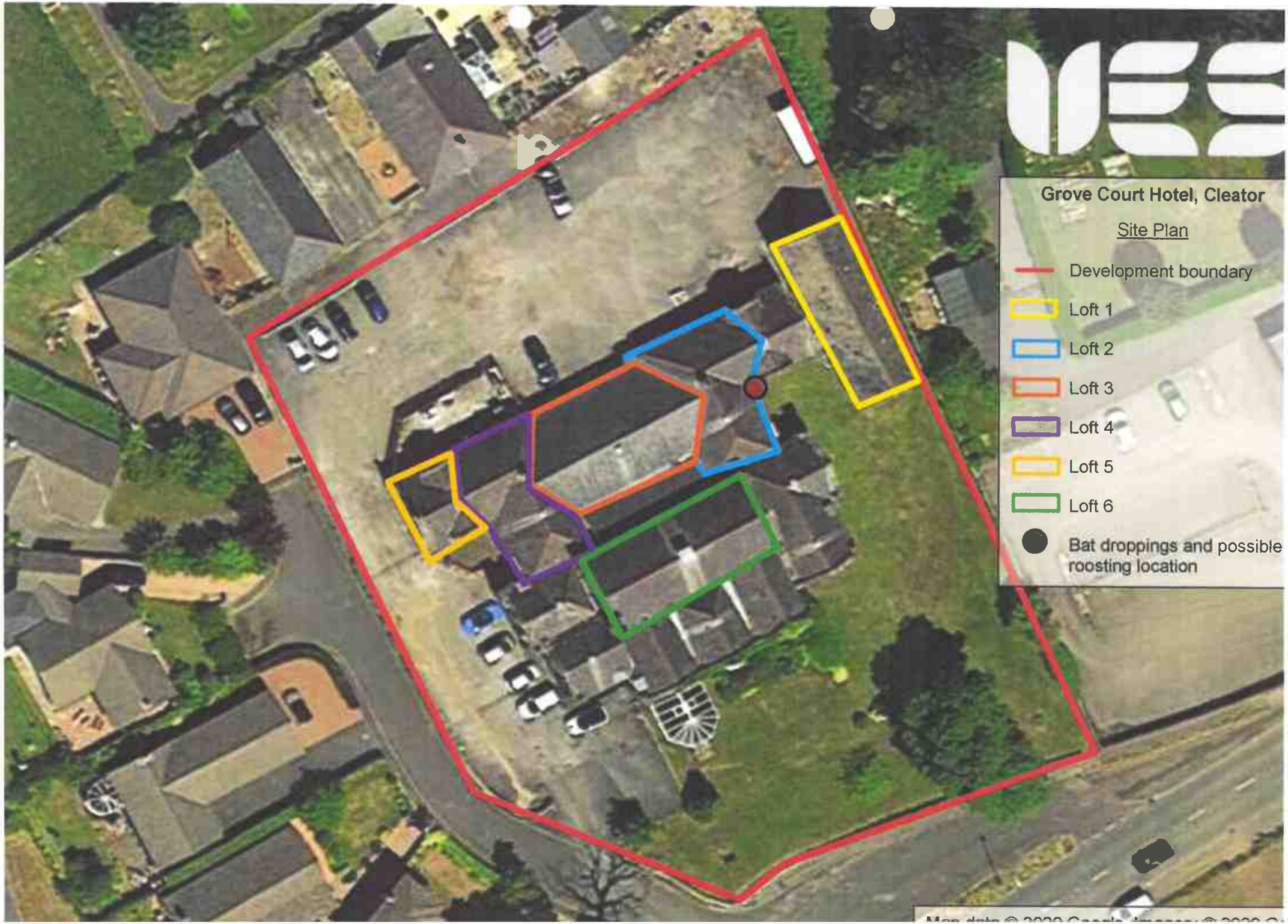
APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Site plan


Grove Court Hotel, Cleator
Site Plan
Development boundary
Loft 1
Loft 2
Loft 3
Loft 4
Loft 5
Loft 6
Bat droppings and possible roosting location

Photograph 1 – Northern aspect of the hotel with the view of the extension to the east.

Photograph 2 – Northern aspect of the hotel (continued).

Photograph 5 – Eastern aspect of the original section of the hotel.

Photograph 6 – Southern aspect of the hotel.

Photograph 7 – South western aspect of the hotel.

Photograph 8 – North western aspect of the hotel.

Photograph 15 – More gaps between stonework and window, same location as Photograph 14.

Photograph 16 – Gaps at the coping stones on the southern aspect above the conservatory.

Photograph 13 – Gaps in the stonework on the southern aspect of the hotel.

Photograph 14 – Gaps between stonework and window arch on the southern aspect of the hotel.

Appendix 3 – Photographs

Photograph 9 – Gap between boxed soffit and wall on the western aspect of the extension.

Photograph 10 – Gap between boxed soffit and wall on the eastern aspect of the extension.

Photograph 3 – Eastern aspect of the extension of the hotel.

Photograph 4 – South eastern aspect of the hotel showing the non-rendered aspect of the extension.

Photograph 21 – Evidence of bird activity under the wooden eves on the northern aspect of the hotel.

Photograph 22 – Southern aspect is lit from ground level flood lights.

Photograph 23 – The western aspect is lit by a flood light attached on the apex of the gable end.

Photograph 24 – Loft space within the extension (Loft 1) is of a trussed construction.

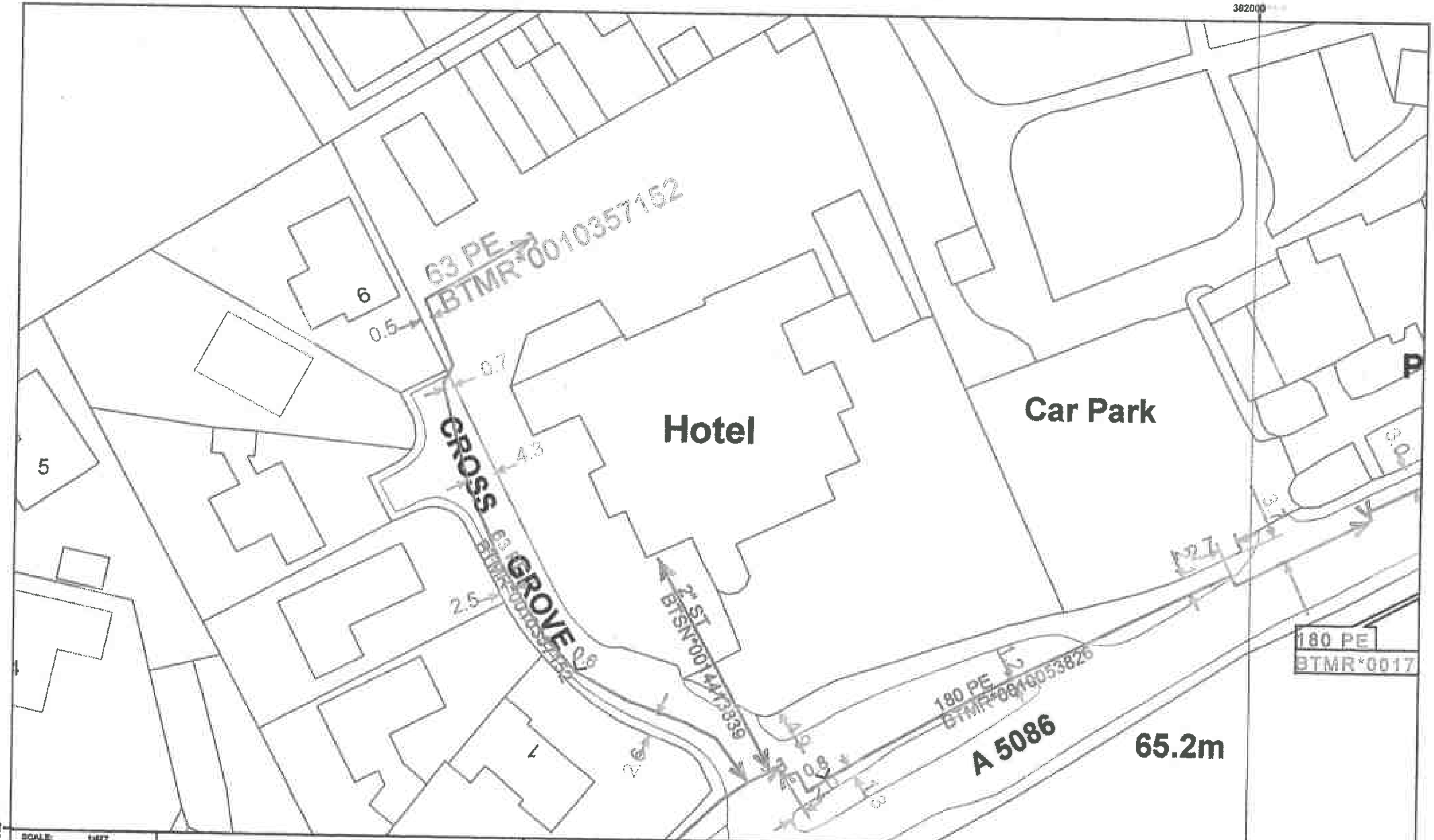
Photograph 25 – Gaps between the beams and wall at each gable ends of the extension.

Photograph 26 – Loft space within the main section of the old build (Loft 3) is of trussed construction.

Photograph 27 – Loft spaces Lofts 2 and 5 are both of king post construction.

Photograph 28 – A small section of Loft 5 is lined with breathable membrane.

Appendix 4 – Statutory and planning context



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Low Pressure
Medium Pressure
Intermediate Pressure
Regional High Pressure
Abandoned LP Pipe
Abandoned MP Pipe

0 10 20 Metres

Some examples of Plant Items:

Valve — Depth of Cover — Syphon — Diameter Change — Material Change

TITLE: CA23 3DT

The plan shows those pipes owned by Northern Gas Networks or the relevant Gas Distribution Network in their roles as Licenced Gas Transporters (GT). Gas pipes owned by other GTs, or otherwise privately owned, may be present in this area. Information with regard to such pipes should be obtained from the relevant owners. The information shown on this plan is given without warranty, the accuracy thereof cannot be guarenteed. Service pipes, valves, syphons, stub connections,etc. are not shown but their presence should be anticipated. No liability of any kind whatsoever is accepted by Northern Gas Networks, the relevant Gas Distribution Network, or their agents, servants or contractors for any error or omission. Safe digging practices, in accordance with HS(G)47, must be used to verify and establish the actual position of mains, pipes, services and other apparatus on site before any mechanical plant is used. It is your responsibility to ensure that this information is provided to all persons (either direct labour or contractors) working for you or near gas apparatus. The information included on this plan should not be referred to beyond a period of 28 days from the date of issue.

ArcGIS Server 9.3.1

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