



## **Ecological assessment of Docklands Innovation Park, East Wall Road, North Dock, Dublin 3**

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### **Introduction**

This report is prepared to determine the ecological potential of the subject site at East Wall Road. A site visit was carried out on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2020 to identify the existing ecological features on the site. The site comprises of a number of buildings and mostly comprises of hard standing. There are no trees or hedgerows present on the site. There were no known flora identified on the site.

The site was also examined for potential fauna and protected species including bats. There were no identified fauna or protected species present on the site.

Bats are a widespread element of the Irish fauna. They are known to occur from much of the rural landscape, but they are also present within the urban environment and here they occupy buildings and occasionally trees for short or long periods. Houses and other buildings are a vital element of the annual cycle of all Irish bat species and at no time more so than the period May to August, but many bats may also avail of buildings as hibernation sites. Summer is the easiest time to identify the presence of bats due to the often-increased numbers present, the high level of activity and the milder, drier weather allowing bat signs to accumulate.

The presence of large numbers of bats within a building can be determined throughout the year from staining or droppings that have not been removed by cleaning or weather conditions.

The presence of bats is usually known to the maintenance staff of an industrial park or building complex unless there is very minor activity, substantial inaccessible buildings or mature trees or old walls within which bats may be overlooked.

Changes to a site including demolition, extension to or modification of existing buildings as well as new construction may remove or modify bat roosting sites and may also affect their feeding and commuting activity.

Bats are protected by Irish and EU law and to prevent unlawful injury or death, it is essential that a full understanding of the site is available in advance to protect the resident bats from unintentional harm and to create a pathway by which a legal derogation and exemption may be designed in consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Based on Bat Conservation Ireland and NPWS data and surveys undertaken by the author, the following bat species are known from this area of Dublin:

Common, soprano pipistrelle, Nathusius' pipistrelle (within 600 metres) Leisler's bat, Daubenton's bat, Natterer's bat and whiskered bat (Phoenix Park), brown long-eared bat (not within 2 kilometres).

## **Methodology**

The buildings were examined on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2020 to determine whether there were suitable features to provide roosts for bats, whether there were signs of bat occupancy and to discuss any historical encounters between maintenance staff, security staff or other employees or visitors to the buildings and individual bats or greater numbers of bats.

All buildings were examined with the aid of a 10 x 42 Nikon Aculon binoculars and two employees within the complex were questioned regarding bat evidence (a security man with 10 years employment within the Industrial Park and an electrician with several years' experience of the buildings).

The location of the site relative to other bat records and survey results were evaluated on a map of the Dublin area.

## **Results**

There is no evidence of bat usage of the site at East Wall Road. There was no evidence of staining, no bat droppings and no feature with bat roost potential within the site. No staff had encountered bats or had been informed of bat presence or activity. Pigeons and gulls were reported as being the two key occupants of the roof level. There are a number of minor sites of potential that were inaccessible without considerable additional difficulties in assessing (i.e. access by means of a hoist or other Mobile Elevating Work Platform (MEWP) and the removal of roofing materials to check for bat presence). This was deemed unnecessary as there are less disruptive means by which this can be checked once bat activity becomes more sustained in spring and summer.

Bat records within the immediate area include Nathusius' pipistrelle (Castleforbes Street and Grand Canal Basin), common pipistrelle and Leisler's bat at Castleforbes Street and common and soprano pipistrelles and Leisler's bats at Aldborough House, Portland Row.

### **Proposed Development**

Demolition of the existing 2 no. / 3 no. storey light industrial / commercial units on the site (Units 1 to 43) retaining units 11, 15, 16 on site. This will remove most structures within the existing footprint. This will allow the construction of 336 residential apartment units and landscaping work, provision of public open spaces (3,285 sq.m) new internal roads and new boundary treatments, ESB substation, PV Panels at roof level, parking spaces, fascia signage associated with each commercial / retail unit etc.

### **Potential Impacts on bats**

There will be a loss of existing buildings as a result of this proposal and construction operations within the site that removes very low roost potential for bats. There is no evidence of bat usage of the buildings.

### **Do Nothing Scenario**

In the absence of construction, the site would continue to provide very low bat roost potential.

### **Worst case scenario**

If the development were undertaken without mitigation and bats were present there is very low to negligible potential for bat injury or death within buildings for demolition.

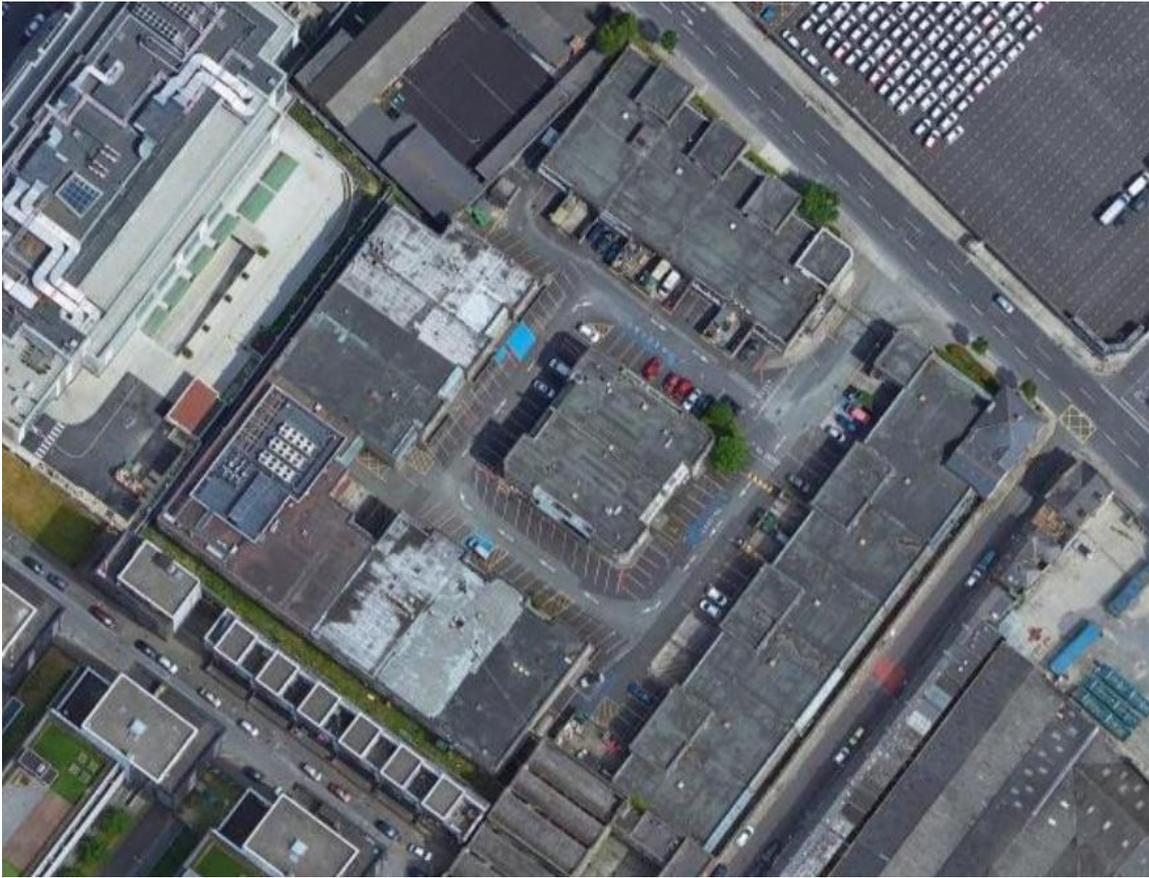
### **Measures recommended**

Prior to any construction works on site, the building will be examined under the supervision of a qualified expert. In the unlikely event that the roof spaces in the buildings revealed the presence of bats, a derogation licence will be obtained and bat boxes will be erected. If bats are present, a derogation shall be sought from the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. All measures conditioned within the licence from the NPWS shall be implemented under the appointed scientific agent who shall be a bat specialist. The following bat boxes are proposed in the eventuality of bats being discovered:

Provision of alternative roosting opportunities with Bat boxes. These shall open out to the south to provide solar warming of bats in summer. Boxes shall be over 2.5 metres above ground and shall be away from direct illumination. 2 x 1FR Schwegler bat boxes or their equivalent are proposed if built into or attached to the walls of Unit 15 + 16 or 2F bat boxes if mounted on poles or walls.

### **Conclusion**

There is no known usage of the site by bats.



Existing site (above) and proposed development (below)