

97A-117, Caversham Road, Reading

Bat Survey Report

October 2022

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Aspect Ecology was commissioned by Bellway Homes Limited (Thames Valley) to provide ecological input in respect of proposed development of land at 97A-117, Caversham Road, Reading, RG1 8AN, centred at grid reference SU 71264 74174, hereafter referred to as 'the site'. A planning application has been submitted to Reading Borough Council (ref: 221324) for redevelopment of the site to provide 60 residential units with associated landscaping, parking and infrastructure.
- 1.2. The site was surveyed in June 2022 based on standard extended Phase 1 methodology. In addition, a general appraisal of faunal species was undertaken to record the potential presence of any protected, rare or notable species, with specific surveys conducted in respect of bats. The results are provided within an Ecological Appraisal produced by Aspect Ecology in August 2022 and submitted with the planning application.
- 1.3. No evidence of roosting bats was recorded during the preliminary roost assessment completed in June 2022, however several buildings were found to provide suitable opportunities for roosting bats such that further survey work was recommended. In summary, buildings B3a, B3b, B4c, B5, B6 and S3 have low suitability for roosting bats, while buildings B1 and B2 have moderate suitability. Buildings B4a, B4b and structures S2-S5 have negligible suitability for roosting bats. This report details the methodology and results of the detailed dusk emergence and dawn re-entry bat survey work.

2. Legislation

- 2.1. All British bats are classed as European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and are also listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). As such, both bats and their roosts (breeding sites and resting places) receive full protection under the legislation. If proposed development work is likely to result in an offence, a licence may need to be obtained from Natural England which would be subject to appropriate measures to safeguard bats. Given all bats are protected species, they are considered to represent important ecological features.

3. Methodology

Dusk Emergence and Dawn Re-entry Surveys¹

- 3.1. In accordance with best practice guidance dusk emergence/dawn re-entry surveys of those buildings with low or moderate suitability to support roosting bats were completed. Two survey visits were carried out for those buildings with moderate suitability. Buildings with low suitability were subject to a single survey visit, with the exception of B4c which could not be accessed internally and therefore a second dusk emergence/ dawn re-entry survey was completed.

¹ Surveys based on: English Nature (2004) 'Bat Mitigation Guidelines' and Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn)'. Bat Conservation Trust

- 3.2. Surveyors employed Anabat Scout detectors and Infrared cameras to aid identification of any bats observed. Surveyors were in position 15 minutes prior to sunset, remaining in place for 1.5 to 2 hours. At dawn, surveyors were in place approximately 1.5 to 2 hours before sunrise and remained in place until 15 minutes after sunrise. This survey method aims to identify any roosting bats emerging from or returning to potential roost sites and characterise the roost/(s) identified. Surveyor locations are shown on Plan 6560/BAT1. Due to the large number of surveyors required for buildings B1 and B2, the rear was surveyed at dusk and the frontages at dawn.
- 3.3. This survey work was carried out during suitable weather conditions, as set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Dusk and dawn survey details.

Date	Start & end times & time of sunset/sunrise	Buildings	Weather
22/08/22 (dusk)	Start time: 19:58 End time: 21:43 Sunset: 20:13	Rear of B1 and B2, plus S3	Dry (except 5 minutes of light rain) at ~20:45, 100% cloud, BF2, 18-19°C
Comments: The surveys were undertaken by 6 surveyors under direction of licence holder 2019-38859-CLS-CLS			
23/08/22 (dawn)	Start time: 4:32 End time: 6.17 Sunrise: 6.02	Frontage of B1 and B2, plus B6	Dry, 100% cloud, BF1, 15-18°C
Comments: The surveys were undertaken by 3 surveyors under direction of licence holder 2019-38859-CLS-CLS			
24/08/22 (dusk)	Start time: 19:53 End time: 22:08 Sunset: 20:08	B4c and B5	Dry, 20% cloud, BF3, 20-23°C
Comments: The surveys were undertaken by 2 surveyors under direction of licence holder 2019-38859-CLS-CLS			
31/08/22 (dusk)	Start time: 19:38 End time: 21:53 Sunset: 19:53	B3a and B3b	Dry, 5% cloud, BF2, 18-22°C
Comments: The surveys were undertaken by 2 surveyors under direction of licence holder 2019-38859-CLS-CLS			
14/09/22 (dawn)	Start time: 4.35 End time: 6.50 Sunrise: 6.35	Frontage of B1 and B2	Light rain, 100% cloud, BF2, 14°C
Comments: The surveys were undertaken by 3 surveyors under direction of licence holder 2019-38859-CLS-CLS			
6/10/22 (dusk)	Start time: 18:16 End time: 20:01 Sunset: 18:31	Rear of B1 and B2	Dry, 5% cloud, BF2, 16°C
Comments: The surveys were undertaken by 5 surveyors under direction of licence holder 2019-38859-CLS-CLS			

BF0 = calm, BF12 = hurricane force.

Survey Constraints / Limitations

- 3.4. The second survey for the rear of buildings B1 and B2 was scheduled for the 13th September, in accordance with best practice guidance, but had to be cancelled due to persistent rain. The survey had to be rescheduled to the 6th October 2022 which is outside of the accepted survey season in accordance with best practice guidance. However, temperatures were warm at 16°C and bat activity was recorded. In addition, the frontage of the two buildings were surveyed in mid-September. As such, and considering the relatively low levels of activity recorded on all other survey visits, the sub-optimal final survey of the rear of buildings B1 and B2 is not considered a significant constraint to the survey findings.

4. Results

- 4.1. The results of the dusk emergence and dawn re-entry surveys are provided in Table 2 below. No bats were observed emerging from the buildings. Minimal other bat activity was recorded during the dusk and dawn emergence surveys undertaken, with occasional to frequent passes of Common Pipistrelle, occasional passes of Soprano Pipistrelle, and very few *Myotis* sp. and *Nyctalus/Serotine* sp. registrations recorded.

Table 2. Results of the dusk emergence and dawn re-entry surveys in August and September 2022.

Building	Date	Sunset/ sunrise	Emergence/ re-entries	Summary of other activity
B1	22/08/22 (rear of buildings)	Sunset: 20:13	None	Frequent passes by Common Pipistrelle and low number of <i>Myotis</i> sp. registered passing.
	23/08/22 (frontage)	Sunrise: 06:02	None	None
	14/09/22 (frontage)	Sunrise: 06:35	None	None
	06/10/22 (rear of buildings)	Sunset: 18:31	None	Few Common Pipistrelle passes and one Soprano Pipistrelle.
B2	22/08/22 (rear of buildings)	Sunset: 20:13	None	Frequent passes by Common Pipistrelle.
	23/08/22 (frontage)	Sunrise: 06:02	None	None
	14/09/22 (frontage)	Sunrise: 06:35	None	None
	06/10/22 (rear of buildings)	Sunset 18:31	None	Few Common Pipistrelle passes, one Soprano Pipistrelle and a singular unidentified pass.
B3a and B3b	22/08/22	Sunset: 20:13	None	Frequent passes by Common Pipistrelle
	31/08/22	Sunset: 19:53	None	Frequent registrations of Common Pipistrelle.
B4	24/08/22	Sunset: 20:08	None	Frequent Common Pipistrelle passes with very few Soprano Pipistrelle and a singular <i>Nyctalus/ Serotine</i> registered.
B5	24/08/22	Sunset: 20:08	None	Frequent Common Pipistrelle passes with very few Soprano Pipistrelle.
B6	23/08/22	Sunrise: 06:02	None	None
S3	22/08/22	Sunset: 20:13	None	Low number of Common Pipistrelle foraging and commuting passes.

5. Evaluation and assessment of likely effects

- 5.1. As noted above, the buildings on site were found to exhibit negligible to moderate suitability for roosting bats and no evidence of bats was recorded during the inspection survey. The dusk emergence and dawn re-entry survey work undertaken also found no evidence that bats are roosting within any of the buildings. As such, it is considered that roosting bats are absent from the site and no specific mitigation or licensing for bats is required prior to works commencing. Nonetheless, bats are dynamic animals and it remains possible that individuals could colonise the site in the future. Natural England guidance in respect of European Protected Species such as bats advises that, even where proposals are reasonably unlikely to result in any offence, such that licensing is not required, reasonable precautions should be taken to minimise the risk to protected species in the unlikely event that they should be found during the course of the activity. Accordingly, it is recommended that an update survey of the building should be undertaken prior to the commencement of works to confirm the current status of bats should any considerable time (e.g. >2 years) elapse between the survey work detailed above and any development works.
- 5.2. Any new lighting provided as part of the proposals should be positioned in order to avoid illuminating any of the bat boxes to be incorporated (see EE2 of the Ecological Appraisal 2022) so as to maintain the long-term potential of these features to provide roosting opportunities for bats.

Enclosed:

- Plan 6560/BAT – Bat Survey Results
- Appendix 6560/1 – Legislation Summary

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Key:

-  Site Boundary
-  Surveyor Location
-  IR Camera



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Bat Survey Plan

6560/BAT1

B/JP

October 2022

PROJECT

TITLE

DRAWING NO.

REV

DATE



ecology • landscape planning • arboriculture

The logo for Aspect Ecology Ltd features the word "aspect" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. A thin, white, diagonal line is positioned above the "t", extending from the top of the letter and pointing towards the right.

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