

Bat Survey of 17 Saint Barnabas Road, Emmer Green, Reading

Client Peppy Dosanjh
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Non-technical Summary

Background

In December 2020, Crossman Associates was commissioned by Peppy Dosanjh to undertake a bat survey of 17 Saint Barnabas Road, Emmer Green, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 8RA.

Development proposals involve the enlargement of the living accommodation via side extensions.

Methodology

The scoping survey was undertaken by Fairbrass Knowles, a licensed bat worker and experienced ecologist.

The dwelling was inspected both externally and internally for any evidence of bat presence, such as droppings, food remains, staining or actual bats.

Results

The property is a C. 1970's detached, two storey brick-built dwelling located within Emmer Green, a suburban village associated with the northern side of Reading. Immediate surroundings are predominantly of an urban nature. The dwelling is in a well-maintained state and is constructed from modern and uniform materials that includes a well-sealed roof of modern flat concrete peg tiles and tight-fitting soffits. The roof void is well-sealed. No evidence of bat activity was recorded, and the house lacks features with significant potential to support roosting bats. The property has **Negligible Suitability** for roosting bats.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the following be undertaken as part of the development;

- Precautionary approach to the development in relation to bats.
- Fit 2 number integral sparrow boxes

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1. Background

- 1.1. In December 2020, Crossman Associates was commissioned by Peppy Dosanjh to undertake a bat scoping survey of 17 Saint Barnabas Road, Emmer Green, Reading Berkshire, RG4 8RA; site Ordnance Survey grid reference SU 7140 7654.
- 1.2. Figure 1 in Appendix I provides a site location map.
- 1.3. Development proposals involve extending the dwellings living accommodation via side extensions. The loft will remain un-converted.
- 1.4. The objectives of the survey were to:
 - Make an assessment of the likely presence or absence of bats and birds
 - Identify any legislative or planning policy constraints relevant to the site
 - Determine the need for further surveys, compensation or mitigation

Site Description

- 1.5. The property is a C. 1970s detached two-storey rectangular shaped brick-built dwelling with a hipped roof. The dwelling has a single well-sealed roof void and sits centrally within its own plot surrounded by a well-managed garden.
- 1.6. The site occupies within Emmer Green, a suburban village located on the northern side of Reading and immediate surroundings are mainly urbanised, consisting of a network of residential roads lined with dwellings. The wider landscape tends to be a continuation of the urbanised theme. To the north, east and west the village peters out into less populated farmland and a golf course.

- 1.7. No significant woodland or watercourses lay close by.

Legislation

- 1.8. In the UK all species of bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2011 (amendment). Under this legislation it is a strict liability offence to injure or destroy a bat or to disturb damage or destroy the resting place of a bat. Under this legislation the UK is obliged to fully take into account bats within the planning process and the level of bat activity on-site must be fully assessed prior to the assessment the planning application
- 1.9. In Britain all wild birds are granted legal protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act ((1981) (as amended)). This legislation protects the birds, their eggs and nests whilst being built or in use.

2. Methodology

Desktop Study

Data search

- 2.1. The MAGIC website was accessed to gain information on any statutory site designations within 4 km of the site that are designated for bats.

National Planning Policy

- 2.2. National Planning Policy has been reviewed for policies that relate to nature conservation relevant to the site.

Field Survey

Bat scoping survey

- 2.3. The building was methodically inspected internally and externally for any evidence of roosting bats, including actual bats, droppings, urine staining and evidence of feeding activity such as discarded insect wings and cases.
- 2.4. The building was also assessed for its suitability to support roosting bats by considering several factors including whether bats can access internal and external voids within the building and whether these voids provide adequate protection and shelter for roosting bats. If the building is not confirmed as a roost, it is assessed from High to Negligible Suitability as follows;
 - **High Suitability** – many roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be old, large and rural

- **Moderate Suitability** – some roosting opportunities. Building tend to be old, rural with some recent maintenance
- **Low Suitability** – few roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be modern, urban and well maintained
- **Negligible Suitability** – insignificant roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be small, modern, urban and very well maintained.

Birds

- 2.5. The building was also inspected for the presence of birds including house sparrow *Passer domesticus*. The building was checked for field signs including nesting material, accumulations of droppings and/or pellets.

3. Results

Desktop Study

Data Search

- 3.1. The MAGIC website informed that there are no statutory sites within 4 km of the site that are designated for bats.

Planning Policy

Field Survey

- 3.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) contains sections of relevance to nature conservation that include:
- Paragraph 174: To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:
 - a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity⁵⁶; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation;
 - b) and promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

- Paragraph 175: When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:
 - a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
 - b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
 - c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons⁵⁸ and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
 - d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Bat scoping survey

- 3.3. Survey work was undertaken by Fairbrass Knowles an experienced ecologist and licensed bat worker (class licence ref. 12392 CLS-CLS) and took place on 18 December 2020. The building was fully accessible.

- 3.4. The external and internal conditions of the building are described in the table below and photographs can be found in Appendix II.
- 3.5. A table in Appendix III information sheets set out the criteria for the way a building is assessed for its potential to support roosting bats.

Table 1: building description and bat suitability.

Building	Feature	Feature Description	Bat suitability
The Laurels	Overview	The property is a C. 1970s detached two storey rectangular shaped brick-built dwelling with a hipped roof. The dwelling has a single well-sealed roof void and sits centrally within its own plot surrounded by a well-managed garden. A small uPVC octagonal conservatory has been added to the southern elevation.	Negligible Suitability ☒
	Exterior	The supporting walls of the property are constructed from well-pointed decorative cavity brick walls, all of which are in excellent condition with no evidence of any significant cracks or gaps that could support bats. All windows and doors remain in good condition and all fit tightly within their respective reveals. The exterior walls of the building lack significant bat roosting opportunities.	

	Interior	All living areas provide well-decorated rooms, and the garage remains well-sealed The main dwelling has a single and simply laid out rectangular shaped loft which is formed from a timber cut and pitch roof with a floor to ridge height of approximately 3 m. The floor of the loft is covered with standard style glass fibre loft insulation and the sarking layer is formed from traditional type 1 f bituminous felt, of which all sections remain well fitted with no evidence of significant tears or holes. During the survey no bats, bat droppings or any other bat related evidence was found to be present and overall, the loft provides a well-sealed area with no obvious access points suitable for bats to gain entry.	
	Roof	<i>Main roof</i> The roof is a hipped design clad with modern concrete flat style peg tiles and simple half round ridge and hip tiles. All tiles remain present and well seated in place. The flat design of the peg tiles provides a tightly sealed roof that provides no significant crevices. A single and simple brick-built chimney is present fitted centrally. The chimney is in good condition with the base well-sealed to the roof with tight fitting lead flashings.	

	Soffits are present along the eaves of the roof and all sections remain in excellent condition and well-sealed to the eaves. <i>Flat roof</i> The small ground floor extension present on the southern elevation is fitted with a standard flat roof clad with mineralised felt, which remains in excellent condition with well-sealed eaves. Overall, both the main tiled roof and flat felt roof provide well-sealed features that lack any significant bat roosting opportunities.	
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Birds

- 3.6. During the survey no birds, bird nests or other evidence of birds was found in association with the house.

Evaluation

Bats

- 3.7. The site occupies a predominantly built-up environment with adjacent habitats that, are sub-optimal for bats. It is however likely that small numbers of more urban tolerant bats (typically pipistrelle species) would be present in the general vicinity
- 3.8. During the scoping survey, no droppings, staining, feeding remains or actual bats were observed. The dwelling consists of a modern house with well-sealed walls and roof, and overall the dwelling provides no significant gaps suitable as ingress points for roosting bats and therefore the dwelling is assessed to provide **Negligible Suitability** for roosting bats.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1. The recommendations in the paragraphs below are provided to help ensure that wildlife and important ecological features are protected during the course of works. Recommendations also set out mitigation measures to minimise harm where this cannot be avoided and provide compensation measures to allow the proposals to meet current legislative and planning policy objectives.
- 4.2. Under the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.
- 4.3. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) states that a public authority must 'in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity; Conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat'.
- 4.4. Paragraph 174b) of the NPPF (2018) states 'Plans should ...identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity' and Paragraph 175d) states that '...opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity'.

Species recommendations

Bats

- 4.5. 17 Saint Barnabas Road has been assessed as having **Negligible Suitability** for roosting bats and it is not considered necessary or beneficial to undertake any further survey work.

- 4.6. Bats are transient in nature and can sometimes utilise buildings on an occasional or temporary basis. It is therefore recommended that works to the building are undertaken using a precautionary approach with all roof panels and cavity walls (where present) being dismantled cautiously by hand. In the unlikely event that a bat is found, works should stop immediately and further advice should be sought from Crossman Associates or Natural England.

Lighting

- 4.7. Exterior lighting should take into account the presence of bats and other nocturnal wildlife. If new exterior lighting is planned for the site then it should consist of a modern LED-type and should be directional and or cowed. Lighting should must avoid the over illumination of the garden and those of neighbouring gardens
- 4.8. The choice of lighting is important to minimising light spill and it is recommended that the following factors are considered to reduce the impact as much as possible;
- Narrow spectrum lights with no UV content
 - Low pressure sodium and/or warm white LED
 - Directional downlighting, illuminating downwards and below the horizontal plane to avoid light trespass
- 4.9. An information sheet on lighting is provided under Appendix III; information sheets.

Ecological enhancements

- 4.10. During the construction phase of the new development there is a good opportunity to incorporate a range of inexpensive ecological enhancements that aim to increase the biodiversity of the site. Bird nesting features can be simply incorporated into the existing house or planned extension.

Birds

Integral sparrow nest boxes

- 4.11. New nesting opportunities should be provided for the local bird population with a particular emphasis on house sparrows (which have suffered significant decline) and it is recommended that one of the the extensions is fitted with 1 number sparrow nest box.
- 4.12. Sparrow nest boxes are ideally fitted below eaves or on gable walls and away from windows and doors. Suitable models include the Schwegler 1SP and a model produced by Vivara, both are suitable for surface mounting as well as integral mounting. Both models are strong, durable, long lasting and available in brown or stone colour. An information sheet on integral bird nesting boxes is included in Appendix III.
- 4.13. Bird boxes are available from www.wildlifeservices.co.uk telephone number 0333 9000 92. Further models are supplied by Habitat www.habibat.co.uk telephone number 01642 724626.
- 4.14. It is recommended that the siting of the bat and bird boxes is done in consultation with a suitably qualified ecologist.

Limitations

- 4.15. This report records wildlife found during the survey and anecdotal evidence of sightings. It does not record any plants or animals that may appear at other times of the year and were therefore not evident at the time of visit.
- 4.16. This report represents a preliminary assessment only. Recommendations and conclusions are subject to change should further findings significantly differ from those collected from the survey efforts to date.
- 4.17. The advice contained in this report relate primarily to factual survey results and general guidance only. On all legal matters you are advised to take legal advice.

5. References

Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) *Bats and Lighting in the UK* BCT

HMSO (1981) *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and subsequent amendments)*. HMSO

HMSO (1995) *Biodiversity*. The UK Steering Group Report

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Mitchell-Jones, A.J (2004) *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* English Nature

Mitchell-Jones, A.J , & McLeish A.P. (2012) *The Bat Worker's Manual* (4th Edition)

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Website at www.magic.gov.uk

Stace, C. (1997) *New Flora of the British Isles 2nd Edition*. Cambridge University Press

TSO (2012) *National Planning Policy Framework*. TSO

TSO (2006) *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act* TSO

Appendix I – Site Figures



Site Location



Client Peppy Dosanjh
Title Site Location
Site 17 Saint Barnabas Road
Figure 1
Date 29 December 2020
Scale Indicative



Appendix II – Site Photographs

Photographs 1- 3



Photograph 1:

Front; eastern elevation and northern side elevation



Photograph 2:

Rear; western elevation and southern side elevation



Photograph 3:

Detail; showing ground floor extension with flat roof, present on the southern side elevation.

Photographs 4 - 6



Photograph 4:

Detail; showing the well-sealed soffits present on the main roof, typical throughout



Photograph 5:

Detail; showing the well-fitted fascia board present on the flat roofed extension; typical throughout



Photograph 6:

Roof void; provides a well-sealed area that showed no evidence of bat occupation.



Appendix III– Information Sheets

Bat Habitat Suitably Criteria

Bat Roosting Suitability	Criteria	Survey requirement to prove likely absence
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.	No further survey work required
Low	A building, structure or tree with one or more potential roosting sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically; however, these possible roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used by large numbers of bats and are unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation roosts.	One activity survey
Medium	A building, structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to the size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habit, but is unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.	Two activity surveys
High	A building, structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.	Three activity surveys

Survey requirements are taken from Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (2016), which is the recognised industry standard guidance used by local planning authorities and other statutory consultees.

Information sheet Artificial bird nesting boxes for Buildings: Swifts, house martins and house sparrows



Habibat house
sparrow nest box



Vivara woodstone sparrow
nest box; suitable for both
integral fitment or surface
mounting

Ibstock Swift boxes are also suitable for house sparrows. Can be customised to suit any exterior finish. Site boxes under eaves, away from windows and direct sunlight.

Sparrow boxes should be grouped together and be at least 2 m of the ground. The boxes can be also be sited on gable walls. At least 3 per averaged size house.

Swifts boxes should be at least 5 m above the ground with an clear un-obstructed flight path.

Schwegler house martin box model 9 b double is a suitable box for house martins and can be used to encourage the uptake of a building by this species. The boxes can be attached to the exterior walls in a sheltered position; ideally beneath the eaves. At least two sets should be placed on an averaged size house.

Ibstock Box



Schwegler model 9b