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Bat Survey Report

26-28 Southampton Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 2QL

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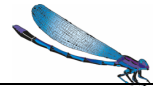
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Report Summary

1. The Ecology Co-op undertook a bat scoping assessment of a business premises at 26-28 Southampton Street in May 2019. The building was assessed as having medium potential to support roosting bats, based on the presence of a number of areas of looser fitting, handmade clay roof tiles upon the southwest facing roof pitch, proposed to be removed to make way for a two-story extension.
2. Based on the above assessment and in line with Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines, two bat emergence survey visits were carried out between May and June 2020, to determine the presence of roosting bats and evaluate the conservation importance of the site for bats.
3. No bats were seen to emerge from the roof tiles on either survey visit. A single common pipistrelle bat *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, was recorded foraging across the site during the course of both surveys.
4. These surveys indicate that the area of the roof proposed to be affected by the works are not currently being used by roosting bats.
5. No further mitigation in relation to roosting bats are considered necessary, however if at any point during the works bats are discovered, works must stop and an ecologist contacted for advice.

This report has been prepared by The Ecology Co-operation Ltd, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client. This report only becomes the property of the client once payment for it has been received in full.

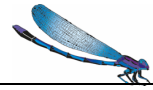
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The owners of the property at 26-28 Southampton Street, intend to submit a planning application to build a southwest facing extension upon the existing property and convert this building from office premises to domestic dwellings, with associated parking/hard and soft landscaping.

The full address for the site is 26-28 Southampton Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 2QL. The central National Grid Reference for this site is SU715729.

The Ecology Co-op undertook a bat scoping assessment of the existing building in May 2019, during which the handmade, traditional clay roof tiles were identified as supporting potentially suitable roosting habitat for bats¹. It is proposed that a section of these tiles will be impacted, upon the southwest facing roof pitch when the proposed extension is tied into the roof of the property.

Overall, the area of roof tiles proposed to be impacted was assessed as having medium potential to support roosting bats and in accordance with current best practice guidelines², a minimum of two emergence surveys were recommended to determine the presence of roosting bats and evaluate the conservation importance of the site for bats.

1.2 Purpose of the Report

In accordance with these recommendations, bat emergence surveys were carried out by The Ecology Co-op between 15th May 2020 and 2nd June 2020 and were led by Dr Ryan Walker, a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM) and licensed bat surveyor (class license 2015-16736-CLS-CLS).

The purpose of this survey work was to determine presence of roosting bats and where necessary prescribe further surveys where necessary and/or appropriate mitigation advice to inform the planning application for the proposed development at the site.

This survey and report was carried out at the request of Hurst Grove Estates Ltd.

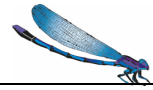
2 LEGAL PROTECTION

Details of legislation and legal protection afforded to all species of British bats are given in Appendix 1.

The results of this survey will be used to determine the need for an appropriate mitigation strategy to ensure compliance with UK and EU wildlife legislation.

¹The Ecology Co-op (2019) Bat Scoping Report; 26-28 Southampton Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 2QL.

²Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). Bat Conservation Trust, London.



3 METHODOLOGY

Two emergence surveys were undertaken on the 15th May and the 2nd June 2020, using the methodology set out in the best practice guidelines prepared by the Bat Conservation Trust. The surveys focused upon the roof tiles covering the southwest elevation of the property, using a single surveyor, positioned according to Figure 1. From this position, the surveyor could see all features potentially suitable for roosting bats that were identified during the initial bat scoping survey and will be impacted by the proposed extension works.

The surveyor recorded any bat activity on or around the potential roosting, under the handmade clay roof tiles identified during the scoping survey, using a full spectrum handheld bat detector to identify species through call frequencies. The bat calls were logged and recorded as sonograms for later confirmation of species where necessary.



Figure 1. An aerial image of the site, showing the positions of surveyor (red dot). Images produced courtesy of Google maps (Map data ©2020 Google).

3.1 Limitations to emergence surveys

In accordance with best practice guidelines, each survey visit was undertaken during the peak period in bat activity and during good weather conditions. The results presented here are therefore considered to be an accurate representation of the general use of the property by roosting bats.

Nevertheless, bats can use roosting features intermittently throughout the year and may be present in larger or smaller numbers depending on their breeding cycle, weather conditions, and in response to disturbance. These surveys record the emergence of bats at the time of the survey visits and therefore only provide a snapshot of bat roosting activity at the site at that time. Bats may be present at other times and the results should therefore be viewed with caution.



4 RESULTS

4.1 Bat Emergence Surveys

4.3.1 Survey conditions

The dates, times, weather conditions, temperatures and personnel for each survey visit is presented in table 1 below:

Table 1: Details of surveys undertaken, timings weather conditions and personnel.

Date	Survey start time/end time	Temp. degrees centigrade, weather conditions throughout survey	Surveyors
15 th May 2020	Start time: 20:20 Sunset: 20:50 Finish time: 22:20	Max/Min temp: 20.0 – 19.8°C. 0% cloud cover and no breeze (BF1).	Ryan Walker
2 nd June 2020	Start time: 20:40 Sunset: 21:11 Finish time: 22:30	Max/Min temp: 23.2-20.7°C. 5% cloud cover and light air (BF1).	Ryan Walker

4.3.2 Bat emergence results

The following descriptions summarise bat activity and emergences from the building for each survey visit.

- 15th May 2020

No bats were recorded emerging from any of the potential roosting features upon the building during the course of the survey. There was consistent foraging by a single common pipistrelle bat *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, over the car park area to the southwest of the building, from 2120 till the end of the survey.

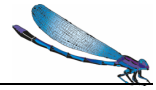
- 2nd June 2020

No bats were recorded emerging from any of the potential roosting features upon the building during the course of the survey. Similar to the May survey, there was consistent foraging by a single common pipistrelle bat *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, over the car park area to the southwest of the building, from 2128 till the end of the survey.

5 IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Interpretation of findings

The results of the survey suggest that crevices between the loose-fitting clay roof tiles within the area of southwest facing roof pitch proposed to be impacted by the works are unlikely to support roosting bats. Further, bat activity was low, with only solitary common pipistrelle bat foraging recorded during both surveys, suggesting species diversity and abundance in this area is low.

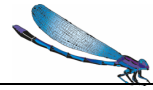


5.2 *Precautionary approach*

As no bats have been identified emerging from or entering roosts on any of the surveys, it is considered highly unlikely that the features identified in the bat scoping survey are regularly used by roosting bats. However, the highly transitory nature of many bat species means that it is not possible to completely dismiss this possibility as the potentially suitable features may be used infrequently. No further mitigation in relation to roosting bats is considered necessary. However, if bats are discovered at any point during the course of the works, works must stop immediately and an ecologist should be contacted for advice on how to proceed in a way that ensures the legal protection of bats and bat welfare is considered.

Given the very low recorded activity by bats in the area, detailed mitigation with respect to artificial lighting is not considered necessary for this development proposal. However, as part of general best practice, it is recommended that all outdoor lighting has downward facing baffles and are set on triggered timers, so ensure that lights are only active when required.

Should you need any further advice on the information provided above, please do not hesitate to contact The Ecology Co-op.



APPENDIX 1 – LEGISLATION AND POLICY

All species of British bat are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended through inclusion in Schedule V. All bat species in the UK are also included in Schedule II of the Habitats Regulations 2010 which transpose Annex II of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora ("EC Habitats Directive") which defines European protected species of animals.

Bat species are afforded further protection by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Under the above legislation it is an offence to:

- kill, injure or take an individual;
- possess any part of an individual either alive or dead;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place or structure used by these species for shelter, rest, protection or breeding;
- intentionally or recklessly disturb these species whilst using any place of shelter or protection; or
- deliberate disturbance in such a way as to be likely to impair their ability to:
 - survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or
 - in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or
 - to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong;
- keep (possess), transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange, any live or dead bat, or any part of, or anything derived from a bat.

It is also an offence to set and use articles capable of catching, injuring or killing bats (for example a trap or poison), or knowingly cause or permit such an action. In the case all species of British bat there is also protection under Schedule 6 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) relating specifically to trapping and direct pursuit of these species.

The Habitats Directive and Habitats Regulations provide for the derogation from these prohibitions for specific reasons provided certain conditions are met. An EPS licensing regime allows operations that would otherwise be unlawful acts to be carried out lawfully. In England, Natural England is the licensing Authority and, in order to grant a license, ensures that three statutory conditions (sometimes referred to as the 'three derogation tests') are met:

- A licence can be granted for the purposes of "preserving public health or safety or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment" (Regulation 53 (2) (e).
- A licence can only be granted if "there are no satisfactory alternatives" to the proposed action.
- A licence shall not be granted unless the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

A bat roost is defined as "any structure or place, which any wild bat uses for shelter or protection." Bats tend to re-use the same roosts; therefore, legal opinion is guided by recent case law precedents, that a roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time. This can include all summer roosts, used for breeding, resting or sheltering and all winter roosts used for hibernating.