

**Gate Church
384 The Meadway
Tilehurst
Reading
Berkshire**

Bat Emergence Survey

Ref: R2300/a

August 2019



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1	INTRODUCTION	3
1.1	Background.....	3
1.2	Legislative Background.....	3
1.3	Site Location and Context.....	5
1.4	Report Format.....	5
2	SURVEY METHOD.....	6
2.1	Emergence Survey	6
2.2	Survey Constraints.....	6
3	SURVEY FINDINGS	7
3.1	Emergence Survey – 23 rd July 2019	7
4	DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	8
4.1	Assessment of Bat Roost Status.....	8
4.2	Impact of Proposals and Recommendations	8
5	REFERENCES	10
	APPENDIX 1 – PLAN OF EMERGENCE SURVEY FINDINGS.....	11
	APPENDIX 2 – RAW EMERGENCE SURVEY DATA	12
	APPENDIX 3 – PROPOSED SITE PLAN	15

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by the Gate Church to carry out a bat emergence survey at The Gate – a church off The Meadway in Tilehurst near Reading, Berkshire.
- 1.1.2** The survey was commissioned in connection with planning proposals lodged with Reading Borough Council (190761) seeking consent for the demolition of the existing building and construction of a new church and community centre (**refer to proposed plans in Appendix 3**).
- 1.1.3** A preliminary ecological appraisal was carried out by AGB Environmental Limited in September 2018. The survey included a preliminary bat roost assessment of the building, which found no evidence of the presence of bats but noted features with bat roost potential such as gaps between soffits and walls and overall was considered to be of low bat roost potential. Further survey comprising one emergence or re-entry survey carried out between May and August was recommended in accordance with good practice guidance (Collins 2016). This report presents the findings of an emergence survey and associated recommendations.

1.2 Legislative Background

- 1.2.1** All British bat species are fully protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('Habitat Regulations'). In summary, the legislation combined makes it an offence to:
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a structure or place used for shelter by a bat;
 - Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb bats; in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair the ability of bats to survive, breed or reproduce or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migrating bats, to hibernate or migrate; or to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species;
 - Deliberately kill, injure or take any bat.

- 1.2.2** The government's statutory conservation advisory organisation, Natural England, is responsible for issuing European Protected Species licences that would permit activities that would otherwise lead to an infringement of the Habitat Regulations. A licence can be issued if the following three tests have been met:
- **Regulation 55(9)(a)** - there is "no satisfactory alternative" to the derogation, and;
 - **Regulation 55(9)(b)** - the derogation "will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range" and;
 - **Regulation 55(2)(e)** - the derogation is for the purposes of "preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment".
- 1.2.3** Local authorities have a statutory duty under Regulation 7(3e) of the Habitat Regulations to have regard to requirements of the Habitats Directive in the exercise of their functions. The Council must therefore consider and determine whether these three tests are likely to be satisfied by applications where survey findings show that European Protected Species licensing is necessary before granting planning permission.
- 1.2.4** European Protected Species mitigation licence applications can be submitted once all necessary planning consents have been granted and Natural England aim to issue a licence decision within 30 working days of a full mitigation licence application.
- 1.2.5** Licensable projects affecting small numbers of seven commonly occurring bat species may fall under the remit of the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (WML-CL21). The Class Licence permits 'Registered Consultants' to carry out licensable operations on site on behalf of clients following the registration of sites with Natural England at least 15 working days before the work is due to start.
- 1.2.6** Survey data supporting EPS licence applications or the registration of the site under the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (WML-CL21) must be up to date i.e. have been conducted within the current or most recent optimal survey season i.e. May to August. Therefore, if surveys show bats are present and

licensable work is delayed until during or after the next survey season, updated surveys will be required to support an application or site registration.

1.3 Site Location and Context

- 1.3.1** The Gate is situated in a residential area in Tilehurst near Reading, Berkshire (OS grid reference SU6691 7316). The church is surrounded by residential houses and their associated gardens. The wider surrounding area is predominantly suburban but more extensive open space and woodland is situated at Churchend Copse and Calcot Park Golf Club approximately 300m to the south. Further woodland at Blundells Copse is situated just over 350m to the north east.

1.4 Report Format

- 1.4.1** The report is set out as follows: Section 3 presents a description of the survey methods; Section 4 summarises the findings of the evening emergence survey; and Section 5 presents a discussion of the survey findings. **Appendix 1** presents a plan showing the emergence survey findings; **Appendix 2** presents the raw survey data; and **Appendix 3** shows the proposed plans.

2 SURVEY METHOD

2.1 Emergence Survey

2.1.1 An emergence survey was undertaken on July 23rd by four surveyors: one surveyor was situated at the south eastern corner (survey position 1); one at the south western corner (survey position 2); one at the north western corner (survey position 3); and one at the north eastern corner (survey position 4).

2.1.2 The survey was carried out with one Echo Meter Touch 2 Pro and three Elekon Batlogger M detectors. The Echo Meter recordings were converted into ZC file format using the Kaleidoscope software package and then analysed using AnalookW. The Batlogger recordings were analysed using the Bat Explorer software package.

2.1.3 The emergence survey started 15 minutes before sunset and continued until 1.5 hours after sunset.

2.2 Survey Constraints

2.2.1 There were no significant constraints to the survey, which was undertaken at a suitable time of year for undertaking emergence and re-entry surveys i.e. May to August (Collins 2016) and in conditions suitable for bat activity i.e. dry with air temperatures above 10°C.

3 SURVEY FINDINGS

3.1 Emergence Survey – 23rd July 2019

- 3.1.1** No bats were observed emerging from the church. Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) was the most abundantly recorded species and was first recorded from ten minutes after sunset with bats consistently commuting from a likely roosting site in a property immediately to the north. Subsequently, commuting and foraging activities were recorded around the church throughout the survey. Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) was recorded rarely also; the species was first detected commuting from the south along the eastern side of the church at 21:38 (32 minutes after sunset). Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) was detected commuting high over the church from sunset with an observed flight path at 21:08 from south to north indicating the likely presence of a roost to the south.

4 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Assessment of Bat Roost Status

4.1.1 In the absence of any observation of bats emerging from the church, in combination with no signs of bats found during the preliminary bat roost assessment, it is considered unlikely that the church supports roosting bats.

4.1.2 Common pipistrelle bats were recorded commuting into site from a nearby roosting site to the north west and it is considered likely that a nearby property supports a maternity roost for this species.

4.2 Impact of Proposals and Recommendations

4.2.1 The survey findings show that the proposed demolition is unlikely to have any impact on bats or their roosts and as such it is considered that the demolition work can proceed lawfully with no requirement for a European Protected Species Licence.

4.2.2 The proposed demolition work will have an impact on features that have the potential to be used by bats in the future. Common pipistrelle bats were roosting nearby and active in the surrounding area, and as such, there is a chance that bats could be present when the work commences, and therefore precautions will be adopted as follows in 4.2.3 to 4.2.5:

4.2.3 Before the demolition work begins, a licensed ecologist will brief the demolition contractors on bat ecology, the legislation protecting bats and their roosts, where bats are most likely to be found, measures to take to minimise the risk of bats being harmed, and what to do if bats are discovered.

4.2.4 Care will be taken to soft strip features with bat roost potential i.e. the fascias where gaps are present by gloved hand under the supervision of a licensed ecologist. Mechanical demolition will be undertaken only when the licensed ecologist has confirmed that potential roosting sites have been stripped fully.

4.2.5 In the event that bats are encountered during the course of the work, the work will stop immediately. If a licensed ecologist is not on site they must be called to site to attend to the bat(s) and provide further advice on how to proceed; work must continue only once further written advice has been

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05/08/2019

received. At this point, a European Protected Species mitigation licence or confirmation of the site's registration under the Bat Mitigation Class Licence CL21 (if applicable) may be required to permit the lawful continuation of the work.

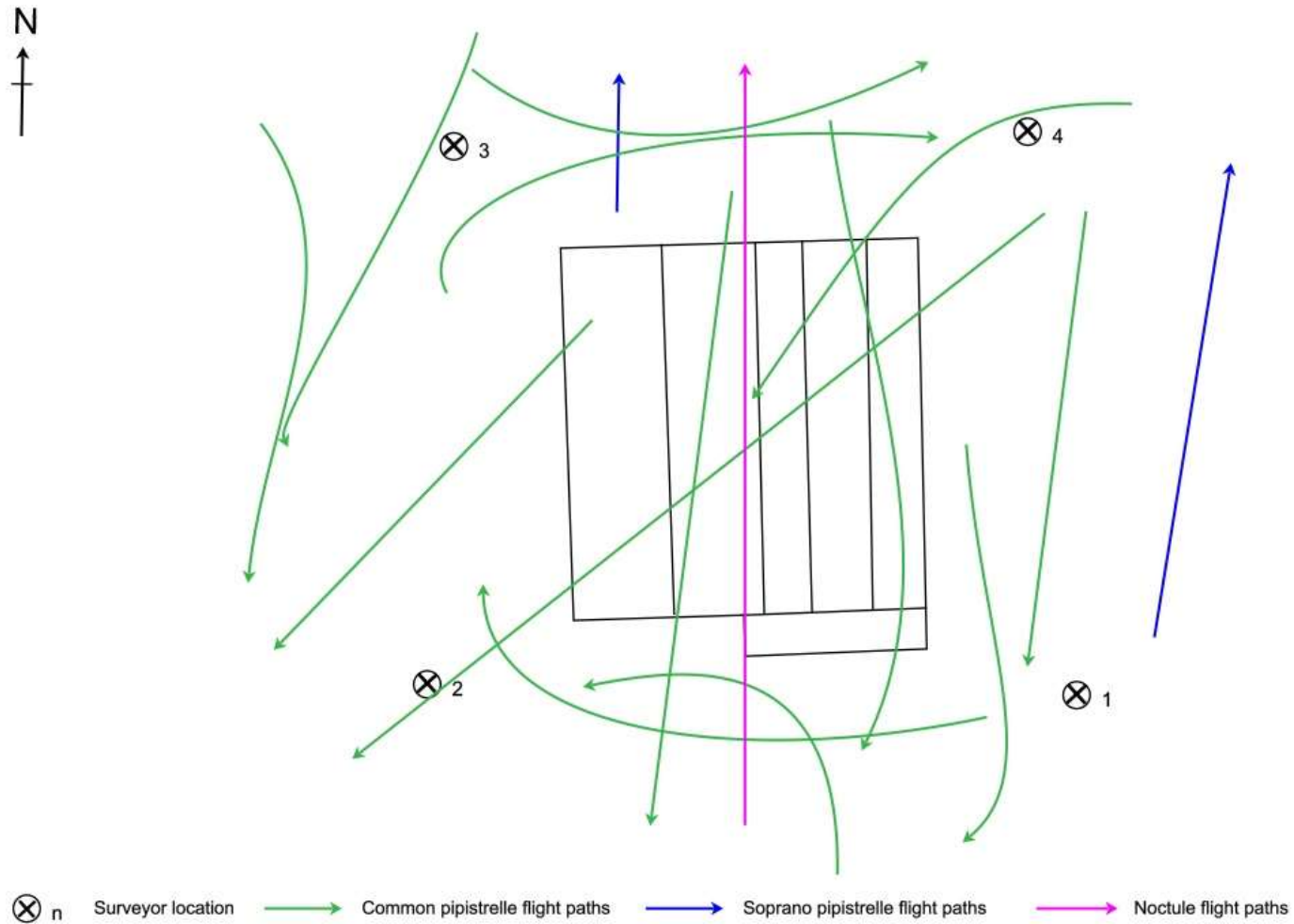
5 REFERENCES

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

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

Mitchell-Jones, A. J. & McLeish, A. P. (2004). *Bat Workers' Manual (3RD Edition)*. JNCC, Peterborough.

APPENDIX 1 – PLAN OF EMERGENCE SURVEY FINDINGS



Drawn by:	Date	Scale:	The Gate Church, 384 The Meadway Tilehurst	
JW	Aug 2019	Not to scale	Bat Emergence Survey Findings	

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APPENDIX 2 – RAW EMERGENCE SURVEY DATA

Evening Emergence Survey – 23rd July 2019

Survey date: 23/07/2019 Location 1: South eastern corner of church Surveyor: Conor Watson Detector: Echo Meter Touch 2 Pro Weather conditions: Dry, warm and humid; calm; c. 28-27°C Start time: 20:51 Sunset: 21:06 Finish time: 22:36		
Time	Species	Survey notes
21:06	Noctule	Distant unseen pass
21:16	Common pipistrelle	Unseen pass
21:17	Common pipistrelle	Pass over church from north east to south west
21:20	Common pipistrelle	Pass from between roofs to south west
21:21	Common pipistrelle	Pass high over church to south
21:22	Common pipistrelle	Distant unseen pass
21:23	Common pipistrelle	Pass over church from north east to south west
21:24	Common pipistrelle	Pass from close to eaves on eastern side heading south
21:26	Common pipistrelle	Pass from close to eaves on eastern side heading south
21:27	Common pipistrelle	Pass from east of church to south
21:28	Common pipistrelle	Pass from ridge height to the south
21:31	Common pipistrelle	Pass from ridge height to south west
21:31	Noctule	Unseen pass
21:37	Noctule	Distant unseen pass
21:39	Common pipistrelle	Unseen pass
21:40	Soprano pipistrelle	Unseen pass
21:44	<i>Pipistrellus</i> sp.	Pass from between roofs to south west
21:55	Noctule	Unseen pass
21:55	Common pipistrelle	Pass close to the south eastern gable end
21:58	Common pipistrelle	Distant unseen foraging and foraging to south and over roof to north east
22:05	Common pipistrelle	Unseen pass
22:07	Common pipistrelle	Distant unseen pass
22:09	<i>Pipistrellus</i> sp.	Brief unseen pass
22:12	Common pipistrelle	Foraging from north to south
22:15	Common pipistrelle	Unseen pass
22:18	Noctule	Unseen pass
22:19	Common pipistrelle	Brief unseen pass
22:35	Noctule	Unseen pass

Survey date: 23/07/2019 Location 2: South western corner of church Surveyor: Steve Foot Detector: Elekon Batlogger M Weather conditions: Dry, warm and humid; calm; c. 28-27°C Start time: 20:51 Sunset: 21:06 Finish time: 22:36		
Time	Species	Survey notes
21:08	Noctule	High pass from south to north over church
21:17	Common pipistrelle	Pass from north east to south west over roof
21:18	Common pipistrelle	Two bats passing and foraging from north to south around trees and neighbouring property to west
21:19	Common pipistrelle	Pass from north to south from properties to the north
21:22	Common pipistrelle	Two bats passing from north to south past trees to west
21:23	Common pipistrelle	Pass from north east to south west
21:28	Common pipistrelle	Pass from south to north over church roof
21:31	Common pipistrelle	Pass from south to north over church roof
21:31	Noctule	High pass from south to north over church
21:32	Common pipistrelle	Pass from north to south from properties to the north
21:32	Common pipistrelle	Pass from north to south from properties to the north
21:32	Common pipistrelle	Pass from north to south from properties to the north

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05/08/2019

21:36	Common pipistrelle	Pass from south to north over church roof
21:38	Common pipistrelle	Pass from north to south from properties to the north
21:39	Common pipistrelle	Pass from south to north along western side of church
21:41	Common pipistrelle	Pass from south to north along western side of church
21:44	<i>Pipistrellus</i> sp.	Pass from south to north over church roof
21:46	Common pipistrelle	Pass from south to north over church roof
21:47	Common pipistrelle	Pass from south to north over church roof
21:48	Common pipistrelle	Pass from south to north over church roof
21:54	Common pipistrelle	Pass from north to south past trees to west
21:55	Common pipistrelle	Pass from south to north over church roof
21:57	Soprano pipistrelle	Pass from south to north over church roof
21:58	Common pipistrelle	Pass around southern side of church from east towards north
22:02	Common pipistrelle	Pass from south to north over church roof
22:05	Common pipistrelle	Pass from south to north over church roof
22:05	Soprano pipistrelle	Pass from south to north over church roof
22:10	Soprano pipistrelle	Pass from south to north over church roof
22:13	Common pipistrelle	Pass from south to north over church roof
22:18	Common pipistrelle	Pass from south to north over church roof
22:20	Common pipistrelle	Pass from south to north over church roof
22:35	Noctule	Pass from south to north high over church roof

Survey date: 23/07/2019

Location 3: North western corner of church

Surveyor: Ruth Coxon

Detector: Elekon Batlogger M

Weather conditions: Dry, warm and humid; calm; c. 28-27°C

Start time: 20:51

Sunset: 21:06

Finish time: 22:36

Time	Species	Survey notes
21:08	Noctule	Unseen pass
21:18	Common pipistrelle	Unseen brief pass
21:20	Common pipistrelle	Pass to south from between tree and building to north
21:21	Common pipistrelle	Pass to south to west of church
21:23	Common pipistrelle	Pass to south to west of church
21:23	Common pipistrelle	Pass to south from between tree and building to north
21:23	Common pipistrelle	Two bats passing to from western side of church to north
21:23	Common pipistrelle	Pass from north to south to west of church
21:24	Common pipistrelle	Unseen pass
21:26	Common pipistrelle	Unseen pass
21:28	Common pipistrelle	Unseen pass
21:30	Common pipistrelle	Pass to south from between tree and building to north
21:31	Noctule	Unseen pass
21:31	Common pipistrelle	Pass from north to south
21:39	Soprano pipistrelle	Low pass from south to north over roof
21:40	Common pipistrelle	Pass from south to north on western side of building
21:44	Common pipistrelle	Unseen brief pass
21:47	Common pipistrelle	Unseen pass
21:48	Common pipistrelle	Unseen foraging
21:51	Common pipistrelle	Brief unseen pass
21:58	Common pipistrelle	Brief unseen pass
21:59	Common pipistrelle	Unseen foraging
22:00	Common pipistrelle	Two to three bats chasing from west to east on northern side of church; possible juveniles
22:04	Common pipistrelle	Pass from south to north
22:05	Common pipistrelle	Unseen pass
22:13	Common pipistrelle	Unseen pass
22:17	Soprano pipistrelle	Unseen pass
22:17	Common pipistrelle	Foraging to north of church
21:19	Common pipistrelle	Unseen pass
22:21	Common pipistrelle	Unseen pass
22:22	Common pipistrelle	Unseen pass
22:23	Common pipistrelle	Unseen pass

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05/08/2019

22:26	Common pipistrelle	Unseen pass
22:28	Common pipistrelle	Unseen pass
22:33	Soprano pipistrelle	Brief unseen pass
22:35	Soprano pipistrelle	Unseen foraging

Survey date: 23/07/2019

Location 4: North eastern corner of church

Surveyor: Nigel Smith

Detector: Elekon Batlogger M

Weather conditions: Dry, warm and humid; calm; c. 28-27°C

Start time: 20:51

Sunset: 21:06

Finish time: 22:36

Time	Species	Survey notes
21:08	Noctule	Unseen pass
21:16	Common pipistrelle	Pass from north to south to east of church
21:17	Common pipistrelle	Pass from north to south to east of church
21:22	Common pipistrelle	Pass from north to south to east of church
21:24	Common pipistrelle	Pass over building from north to south
21:26	Common pipistrelle	Brief unseen pass
21:27	Common pipistrelle	Pass over building from north to south
21:28	Common pipistrelle	Pass from north to south to east of church
21:38	Soprano pipistrelle	Pass from south to north on eastern side of building
21:41	Common pipistrelle	Pass from south to north on eastern side of building
21:56	Common pipistrelle	Foraging over garden
22:01	Common pipistrelle	Foraging over garden
22:07	Common pipistrelle	Two bats foraging over garden
22:11	Common pipistrelle	Pass south to north to east of church
22:13	Common pipistrelle	Brief unseen pass
22:15	Common pipistrelle	Foraging over garden
22:19	Noctule	Distant unseen pass
22:22	<i>Pipistrellus</i> sp.	Distant unseen pass
22:27	Common pipistrelle	Unseen pass
22:32	Common pipistrelle	Unseen pass
22:33	Soprano pipistrelle	Unseen pass

APPENDIX 3 – PROPOSED SITE PLAN



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