

Gas Holder Site, Reading

Bat Emergence Survey

April 2019



**Greenspace
Ecological
Solutions**

Gas Holder Site, Reading

Bat Emergence Survey

A Report for Danescroft (Kenavon Drive
Project Management) LLP

April 2019



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01 of 02

01 Danescroft (Kenavon Drive Project Management) LLP

02 Greenspace Ecological Solutions Ltd

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*The content of this report is the responsibility of Greenspace Ecological Solutions Ltd.
It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to meet the client's requirements, no site survey can ensure complete assessment or prediction of the changeable onsite environment. Furthermore, should more than 12 months elapse between the date of this survey and any subsequent development, it may be necessary to consider the need for an update survey to be undertaken.*

Report Number J20563_P2_Rev B

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1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

Client: Danescroft (Kenavon Drive Project Management) LLP

Site Address: SGN Gasholder No 4, Kenavon Drive, Reading RG1 3DH.

Attending Ecologists: James Johnston (NE Level 2 Bat Class Licence)
Gemma Abela

Survey Dates: 26th September 2018

Site Proposals: Redevelopment of an existing contaminated brownfield site and new residential development with associated parking.

Associated Planning Reference Number: Not yet Submitted

Source of Relevant Documents:

Document:	Source:
Site Location Plan:	Google Earth Pro
Previous Reports:	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Greenspace Ecological Solutions, October, 2018

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Context

2.1.1 In response to the redevelopment of the Gas Holder Site at Alexander Turner Close, Reading, a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was undertaken by Greenspace Ecological Solutions Ltd April 2018. In response to recommendations made within this report, Greenspace Ecological Solutions was commissioned to undertake a single bat emergence survey of the building denoted B1 in that report.

2.1.2 The results of the emergence surveys, as described in this report, serve to ensure that the Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) of bats is maintained throughout the development and that the proposal remains compliant with existing legislation and planning policies which serve to protect bats and their roosts. Where appropriate, proportionate mitigation to be incorporated within the design of the site, is provided within this report.

2.2 Site Location

2.2.1 The site is located on the eastern edge of the town of Reading, Berkshire, at National Grid Reference SU 728 736.

2.3 Site Description

2.3.1 The site occupies approximately 0.71ha and comprises of areas of scrub, scattered trees and buildings within areas of hard standing. A prominent gas holder is also present within the site.

2.3.2 The site is bound by residential dwellings to the east; the River Kennett to the south and east; and the National railway to the north. The wider landscape is one of industrial units to the east and west and pockets of scrubland to the north, beyond the railway.

2.4 Policies and Legislation

2.4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework 2018 (NPPF) aims to protect species of significant conservation importance in England (in this case bats), as covered by wildlife legislation (see below), NPPF, national and local Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP's) and Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. Local planning authorities have an obligation to protect such species, and are also required to seek opportunities to promote and enhance biodiversity in accordance with the above legislation, policies and plans.

2.4.2 All British bat species and their places of rest and shelter receive UK and European protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2010 (as amended) (Habitats Regulations 2010) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended). This

protection means that bats and their places of rest and shelter are a material consideration in the planning process.

2.4.3 Taken together, unless under licence, these make it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture or intentionally take a bat;
- Deliberately or intentionally kill or injure a bat;
- To be in possession or control of any live or dead bat or any part of, or anything derived from a bat;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat;
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection;
- Deliberately disturb any bat, in particular any disturbance which is likely to (i) impair their ability to survive, breed, reproduce or to rear or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or (ii) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

2.4.4 A bat roost may be any structure a bat uses for breeding, resting, shelter or protection. It is important to note that since bats tend to use the same roost sites at different times of year, current legal opinion is that a bat roost is protected whether bats are present at the time.

2.4.5 In addition to the above, certain species of bat are listed on Annex II of the Habitat Regulations 2010. Annex II species include greater and lesser horseshoe bats, barbastelle and Bechstein's bat. Where present, consideration to the requirement of a Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) should be given.

2.5 Objectives of the Survey

2.5.1 The objectives of the surveys were to:

- Determine the presence of bats within the building to be affected by the proposed,
- Identify the number and species of bats, should they be present,
- Identify the entrance/exit points used by bats, should they be present,
- Evaluate the potential for bats to be affected by proposals,
- Identify any legal or policy constraints related to bats that may affect the development,
- Suggest mitigation/compensation measures that may be required.

2.6 Survey Constraints

- 2.6.1 The survey was conducted outside of the core maternity period for bats (May-August). However, the features Potential Roost Features (PRF) recorded on the building were unsuitable for large numbers of bats (such as those within a maternity roost) and the structure was considered to have Low – Negligible potential. This survey was therefore conducted as a precautionary measure and being completed within the active period for bats of May – October, the survey is considered a valid assessment of the buildings use by roosting bats.

3 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

3.1 Emergence/Re-entry Surveys

- 3.1.1 A dusk emergence survey was carried out on the 26th September 2018. The survey was completed in accordance with current best practice guidance (Collins, 2016) and to adequately observe all aspects of the buildings, two surveyors were deployed during the survey.
- 3.1.2 The survey was completed in favourable weather conditions with night-time temperatures of $\geq 10^{\circ}\text{C}$ and little or no rain.
- 3.1.3 To account for the varying times in which differing bat species emerge, evening emergence surveys commenced 15 minutes before sunset and continued for 1 hour and 15 minutes after sunset, or until light levels deemed the survey no longer valid.
- 3.1.4 A summary of the weather conditions, surveyors and survey times recorded during the survey is provided in Table 1.

Table 1 – Survey Times and Conditions

Date	Emergence or Re-entry	Sunset time	Start Time	End Time	Surveyors	Start Weather Conditions	End Weather Conditions
26/09/18	Emergence	18:52	18:37	20:07	James Johnston Gemma Abela	17°C, 0%CC, no rain, wind 0BF	15°C, 0%CC, no rain, wind 0BF

- 3.1.5 To aid audible detection, surveyors were equipped with Elekon Batlogger M bat detectors. These detectors convert the inaudible echolocation of bats into a frequency audible to the human ear. All calls were digitally recorded and the sonograms later analysed through the application of the computer programme Elekon BatExplorer.

4 SURVEY RESULTS

4.1 Emergence/Re-entry Surveys

26th September 2018

- 4.1.1 No bats were recorded emerging from the building.
- 4.1.2 The first bat recorded during the survey was a common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, which was recorded at 19:37hrs, some 45 minutes after sunset.
- 4.1.3 This species, as well as soprano pipistrelle *P. pygmaeus* and noctule *Nyctalus noctula* were recorded in low numbers foraging within and commuting through the site during the survey.
- 4.1.4 With 30 passes recorded in total, bat activity within the site was considered **Low**.

4.2 Summary of Results

- 4.2.1 Table 2 shows a summary of the survey results.

Table 2. Survey results summary

Date	Bats emerging or returning from/to the building	Bat species recorded commuting / foraging within the site
26/09/18	None	Common pipistrelle Soprano pipistrelle Noctule

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Although conducted outside the optimal period when surveying for bats, the structure B1 was identified as having Low – Negligible potential and a Phase 2 Bat Emergence Survey was conducted as a precautionary measure.
- 5.2 As reasonable effort to determine the presence or likely absence of roosting bats within B1 has been applied and no bats or their roosts were recorded, no further consideration to the presence of roosting bats within this structure is required.
- 5.3 In the unlikely event that bats or their roosts are identified during the demolition process, all works should stop and the appointed ecologist or Natural England, be consulted on the appropriate manner in which to proceed.
- 5.4 Low numbers of soprano pipistrelle, common pipistrelle and noctule bats were recorded foraging and commuting within the area and in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF, habitat enhancements for bats should be implemented within the development.
- 5.5 On-site enhancement for bats should be achieved through the use of invertebrate rich planting schemes within the landscape design, consideration to features such as green roofs and walls and the installation of 5 bat boxes which should be integrated within the elevations of the proposed structures. To maximise their likelihood of use, the bat boxes should be installed at a height between 3m and 8m, away from direct illumination by artificial lighting and in a location which ensures connectivity to foraging habitats within the wider landscape. The bat boxes provide by Habibat (<http://www.habibat.co.uk/>) (or similar) are recommended in this instance.
- 5.6 To avoid disturbing bats that may be using the vegetated boundaries for foraging and commuting, as far as is reasonably practical, the lighting design should avoid any direct illumination of the trees which form the site boundary. Where lighting is required, this will be in accordance with the guidance provided in Appendix A, 'Bats and artificial lighting in the UK' (BCT & I 2018)
- 5.7 It is suggested that so long as the above recommendations are considered in full, then the development of the site will be conducted in accordance with current legislation and planning policies which serve to protect bats and their roosts.
- 5.8 Consequently, in regard to bats, there is no known reason why planning permission should not be granted in full.

6 REFERENCES

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

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Appendices