



3-5 Craven Road, Reading

Bat Survey Report

10th October 2017

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

For information relating to the site description and previous bat survey work conducted for the site, refer to the Innovation Group Environmental Services, Bat Presence/Absence Survey Report, dated 21st October 2015.

In summary, the report referred to above described that *"the survey results revealed low levels of foraging and commuting behaviour by common pipistrelle (Pipistrellus pipistrellus) bats and on the dawn survey a single common pipistrelle bat was seen entering the front gable of No. 3 Craven Road. At no time during the surveys were bats observed entering or leaving any of the other buildings on site"*.

1.2 Planning Status

It is understood that the proposed works are to be the subject of a planning application to Reading Borough Council, the Local Planning Authority (LPA), for the demolition of the existing buildings and construction of a new building comprising 25 residential units for Retirement Living, with associated car parking and soft landscaping.

1.3 Aims of Study

GreenLink Ecology Ltd. has been commissioned to update the bat survey work, to inform the planning application and establish whether bats would be a potential legally protected species constraint to the proposed works.

The aim of this report is to present the results of the survey work, assess the potential for the proposed works to impact on bats, make recommendations for appropriate mitigation measures to comply with the legislation and evaluate the need for a European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licence to be applied for.

2 Legislation

All species of bat and their habitats are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CRow Act 2000), and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, which consolidates all the various amendments made to the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) (Amendments) Regulations 1994 in respect of England and Wales.

The 1994 Regulations transposed Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (EC Habitats Directive) into national law.

The legislation makes it illegal under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to:

- Intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take a wild bat;
- Be in possession or control of any live or dead wild bat, or any part of, or anything derived from a wild bat;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a wild bat uses for shelter or protection; and
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection.

Bats are also European Protected Species (EPS). As such under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 it is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European Protected Species;
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species. Disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is 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;
- Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal; or
- Deliberately damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

3 Methodology

In accordance with the 2016 Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) published guidance¹, dusk emergence/pre-dawn re-entry survey work was conducted during September-October 2017 by experienced Natural England bat licence holders Marcus Fry MCIEEM² (licence no. 2015-10955-CLS), Leon Brown (2015-13716-CLS) and Rachel Masters GradCIEEM³ (licence no. 2015-05522-CLS), assisted by Katherine Bright.

During the dusk/pre-dawn survey visits, the surveyors focussed on opposite aspects of the buildings and used Anabat SD1 bat detectors, to enable any bats emerging/re-entering to be recorded.

The dusk emergence survey visit began approximately half an hour before sunset and continued until approximately two hours after sunset. The pre-dawn survey visit commenced approximately two hours before dawn and continued until the sun had visibly risen.

During the survey visits, observations were made regarding bat activity around the area, and any bat ultrasonic echolocation calls that made within range of the bat detectors were recorded and later analysed, to determine which species of bat made them.

¹ Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines*, Bat Conservation Trust (3rd Edition)

² Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (Full)

³ Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (Graduate)

4 Results

In summary, there were no bats recorded emerging from/re-entering either of the buildings and overall, the level of bat activity associated with the site was very low.

During the first dusk emergence survey visit conducted on 21st September 2017, there were no bats recorded emerging from either of the buildings and only intermittent common pipistrelle bat foraging was recorded in association with the off-site land to the south.

During the pre-dawn survey visit conducted on 22nd September 2017, there were no bats recorded re-entering either of the buildings and there was no bat activity recorded in association with the site.

The results of the second dusk emergence survey visit conducted on 9th October 2017 were very similar to the previous visits, with no bats recorded emerging from either of the buildings and only intermittent common pipistrelle foraging activity recorded in association with off-site land to the south.

Table 1: Details of the bat survey

Date	Climatic conditions	Sunset/rise	Bats emerging/re-entering (numbers)	Bat activity (calls)
21/09/17	Scattered cloud, 18°C	19:01	N/A	Common pipistrelle (7)
22/09/17	Clear skies, 12°C	06:45	N/A	N/A
09/10/17	Overcast, 17°C	18:20	N/A	Common pipistrelle (4)

5 Assessment

5.1 Constraints

The bat survey work was conducted by appropriately experienced and licensed ecologists, during the appropriate season (for non-maternity roosts), under optimal climactic conditions and in accordance with the published guidelines. It is therefore considered that there were no significant constraints to the survey.

5.2 Potential Impacts

Although a single common pipistrelle bat was recorded re-entering a roosting location during one of the 2015 survey visits, there was no evidence that bats currently use the buildings for roosting purposes during the 2017 survey visits and overall, the level of bat activity associated with the site was very low.

It is therefore considered that the risk of bat presence/potential impacts to bats as a result of the demolition associated with the proposed works is low.

To address this low risk, mitigation measures are recommended in a subsequent section, to ensure that negative impacts to individual bats and to the conservation status of the local bat population can be avoided.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Mitigation Measures

The 2015 and 2017 survey work has confirmed that overall, there is a very low level of bat activity associated with the site, most likely due to the urban character of the local area and high degree of artificial lighting.

Whilst the 2015 survey recorded a bat re-entering a location on the front gable of 3 Craven Road, the 2017 survey did not record any bats emerging from/re-entering any locations on either building. It is therefore considered that bats do not currently use the buildings for roosting purposes, or that there is only occasional use of the location as a place of temporary shelter.

It is recommended that an EPSM licence is not applied for, since Natural England will not issue a licence on a precautionary basis, although mitigation measures will need to be implemented, to address the low risk of bat presence/potential impacts to bats as a result of the demolition works.

Since there has been no evidence that the building is used by maternity roosting bats, the only seasonal constraint to the demolition of the buildings should be in relation to winter, when common pipistrelle bats will hibernate within the external fabric of buildings.

Prior to undertaking any precautionary mitigation measures, two Schwegler 2FN bat boxes will need to be installed above 4-5 metres on a retained tree in the northern part of the site and positioned so that they are not illuminated by any artificial lighting.

Subsequently, the front gable of 3 Craven Road and the adjacent south-facing gable roof areas (since both locations are identified in the Innovation Group Environmental Services report) should be carefully dismantled under the supervision of a Natural England bat licence holder, from a Mobile Elevated Working Platform (MEWP) or scaffold. It is considered very unlikely that a bat will be present but if so, it will be captured by hand, placed inside a handling bag and relocated into one of the tree-mounted bat boxes that will already have been installed.

If a bat is found to be injured, it will be immediately transferred to a handling bag, kept warm and taken to the Forest Row bat hospital. Works will then need to temporarily cease whilst Natural England is consulted about how to proceed further without the risk of an offence being committed.

In accordance with the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the new development should incorporate 3 no. wall-integrated bat roost features (<http://www.birdbrickhouses.co.uk/brick-nesting-boxes/bat-box/>) and 6 no. wall-integrated bird nesting features (<http://www.birdbrickhouses.co.uk/brick-nesting-boxes/nesting-boxes/>) on different orientations (avoiding south-facing for birds), ideally adjacent to soft landscaped areas/trees. The exact make/model and location of these features should be determined with advice from an experienced ecologist, once planning permission has been granted.

7 Conclusions

To establish whether bats would be a legally protected species constraint to the proposed works, GreenLink Ecology Ltd. was commissioned undertake an updated bat survey, which was conducted by appropriately experienced and licensed ecologists without significant constraint.

The 2015 survey recorded a single common pipistrelle re-entering a location during one of the survey visits. However, the results of the 2017 survey indicate that bats do not currently use any features on either building for roosting purposes and that overall, the level of bat activity associated with the site is very low.

It is considered that an EPSM licence application is not necessary for the site but on a precautionary basis, mitigation measures should be implemented to address the low risk of bat presence/potential impacts to bats as a result of the demolition works.

Recommendations have also been made for enhancement measures, in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.

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9 Appendices

Appendix 1: Illustrating the areas to be carefully dismantled on a precautionary basis

