

**58 St Peters Road
Earley
Reading
Berkshire
RG6 1PH**

Bat Emergence Survey

Ref: R1707/b

September 2017



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1 SUMMARY

- 1.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mr Keeble to undertake a survey for the presence of bats within the semi-detached house at 58 St. Peters Road in Earley, Berkshire.
- 1.1.2** The survey was commissioned in connection with a planning proposal lodged with Reading Borough Council seeking consent to build a two-storey extension to the rear and north-western side of the house.
- 1.1.3** An preliminary daylight bat survey, undertaken in June 2017 revealed features suitable for used by crevice-dwelling bat species, some small gaps underneath the roof tiles and next to the bottom hip tiles at the rear roof elevation and around the chimney; emergence survey work was recommended to confirm the status of the roost.
- 1.1.4** During two emergence surveys completed in August 2017, one common pipistrelle bat was recorded emerging from the north-western roof face of the house on one occasion. The survey findings are consistent with the house being used as a day roost for individual male or non-breeding female common pipistrelle bats i.e. a roost of low conservation importance.
- 1.1.5** The survey findings show that a European Protected Species licence will be required to allow the extension to proceed lawfully and that the site will qualify for registration under the Low Impact Class Licence CL21. Under licence, the impacts of the building work on bats should be mitigated by taking a precautionary soft strip approach, and provision for roosting bats incorporated into the extended home by incorporating an integral bat box.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1** John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP was commissioned by Mr Keeble to undertake a survey for the presence of bats within the semi-detached house at 58 St. Peters Road in Earley, Berkshire.
- 2.1.2** The survey was commissioned in connection with a planning proposals lodged with Reading Borough Council seeking consent to build a two-storey extension to the rear and north-western side of the house.
- 2.1.3** A preliminary daylight bat survey was undertaken by John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP and is reported separately (Daylight Bat Survey (R1662/a); June 2017). During the daylight survey, features suitable for use by crevice-dwelling bat species were found on the outside of the house, such as some small gaps underneath the roof tiles and next to the bottom hip tiles at the rear roof elevation and around the chimney, which could provide roosting opportunities suitable for bats that typically occupy a wide range of crevice roosts, such as pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus* sp.) or small *Myotis* species such as whiskered or Brandt's bat for example. Therefore an emergence survey was recommended, and due to the observation of an emerging bat during that, a further emergence survey was carried out to confirm the roost status and this report presents the findings.

2.2 Legislative Background

- 2.2.1** All British bat species are fully protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 ('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.

2.2.2 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 53(9)(a)** - there is "no satisfactory alternative" to the derogation, and;
- **Regulation 53(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 53(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".

2.2.3 Local authorities have a statutory duty under Regulation 9(5) 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 any necessary planning consents.

2.2.4 European Protected Species 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.

2.2.5 Licensable projects affecting small numbers of seven commonly occurring bat species may fall under the remit of the Low Impact 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.

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2.3 Site Location and Context

- 2.3.1** The house is situated on the southern side of St. Peters Road in Earley, Berkshire (OS Grid Reference: SU 74295 72427).
- 2.3.2** The local area is urban and the property is surrounded by further residential properties and their associated gardens. Reading University's Whiteknights Campus is about 400 metres away from the property to the south-west, which is home to Whiteknights Lake, a small patch of woodland, a mixture of mature trees, meadows and open fields. Highwood Local Nature Reserve is situated 500 metres to the east, which is a small woodland with a lake covering roughly 15 hectares. On the southern side of this local nature reserve is an allotment.

2.4 Report Format

- 2.4.1** The report is set out as follows: **Section 3** presents a description of the survey methods; **Section 4** summarises the findings of the detector surveys; and **Section 5** presents a discussion of the survey findings and recommendations; **Appendix 1** presents the raw survey data; **Appendix 2** presents plans of the emergence survey findings; Appendix 3 illustrates the new bat roost provision.

3 SURVEY METHOD

3.1 Evening Emergence Surveys

3.1.1 Evening emergence surveys were undertaken on 8th August 2017 and 30th of August 2017 by an ecologist registered under Natural England bat survey Class Licence (CL018) situated at the rear of the house with a view of the roof to be affected by the proposed building work.

3.1.2 The first emergence survey was undertaken with the aid of an Anabat SD2 detector and EM Touch. The Anabat recordings were analysed using the AnalookW software package. The second emergence survey was undertaken with the aid of an Elekon Batlogger M detector. The Batlogger recordings were analysed using the BatExplorer package.

3.1.3 The evening emergence surveys started 15 minutes before sunset, and continued until 1.5 hours after sunset.

3.2 Survey Constraints

3.2.1 The survey was undertaken at a suitable time of year for undertaking emergence surveys i.e. May to August (Collins 2016) and in conditions suitable for bat activity i.e. dry with air temperatures above 10°C and as such had no significant constraints.

4 SURVEY FINDINGS

4.1 Evening Emergence Surveys

- 4.1.1** During the evening emergence survey on 8th August 2017, a common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) bat emerged from the roof at the north-western side of the house at 20:49. The amount of bat activity was relatively low in an urban area with some foraging in the rear garden by soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) recorded. A noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) bat was recorded passing to the house at 20:44, 20:47, 21:36 and 21:50, but this was not seen. The foraging soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) was seen circling around the north-western side of the house and passing the house from the rear garden, flying from south-west to north-eastern direction.
- 4.1.2** During the evening emergence survey on the 30th of August 2017, not bats emerged. The amount of bat activity was relatively low, with mostly foraging common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) heard but not seen. A noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) bat was recorded passing at 20:09 and at 20:17, but was not seen on either occasion. There was one record of a soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) foraging at 20:59, but this was also not seen. At 21:18 a *Myotis* sp. bat was recorded foraging, but this was also not seen.

5 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Assessment of Status of Bat Roost

5.1.1 The observation of one common pipistrelle bat roosting behind the roof tiles to the north-western side of the house on one occasion during the peak season for recording bat activity shows the house acts as a day roost for individual male or non-breeding female common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle bats.

5.1.2 Common pipistrelle bats and bats are widespread and common throughout the UK (Richardson 2000). Roosts supporting small numbers of non-breeding common pipistrelle bats are considered to be of low conservation importance (Mitchell-Jones 2004).

5.2 Impact of Proposals and Recommendations

5.2.1 The planned extension of the house will require the removal of the roof tiles to the north-western side of the house and therefore will lead to the loss of a day roost for individual male or non-breeding female common pipistrelle bats, and could harm and/or disturb bats in the absence of mitigation. Therefore a European Protected Species Licence will be required to allow the work to proceed lawfully. Due to the presence of a day roost for a commonly occurring species, the site will qualify for registration under the Low Impact Class Licence CL21.

5.2.2 The confirmation of the site's registration under the Low Impact Class Licence or a full EPS licence must be obtained before the commencement of the licensable work i.e. removal of roof tiles and can be sought only following the grant of planning consent and signing off of any pre-start wildlife related conditions. A licence can be issued by Natural England if the three licensing tests (as detailed in Section 1 of this report) have been met.

5.2.3 To meet the test under Regulation 53(9)(b) or the 'favourable conservation status' test, it would be necessary to demonstrate that the favourable conservation status of bats using the house would be maintained throughout and after the completion of the work by employing mitigation measures during the building work and by providing compensatory roosts. A mitigation and compensation strategy demonstrating how the works will meet the Test is detailed in Section 6 below:

6 MITIGATION AND COMPENSATION PROPOSALS

- 6.1.1** Under the terms of the Low Impact Class Licence or full EPS Licence obtained before the building work begins, the start of building work affecting the day roosts i.e. removal of roof tiles to the north-western side of the house will be timed to take place between March and mid-November to avoid the periods when bats are most susceptible to disturbance i.e. winter hibernation season (mid-November to February) to minimise the risk of disturbing torpid bats.
- 6.1.2** An alternative roost will be provided in advance of works by erecting one Schwegler 1FF woodcrete bat box on a mature tree or building on the site to provide temporary roosting opportunities. The box will be positioned so that it is at least four metres above the ground and the entrances are free of obstruction.
- 6.1.3** The licensed ecologist, or Registered Consultant (if working under the Low Impact Class Licence) will give a toolbox talk to the building contractors on site detailing that bats are present, the legislation protecting bats, the locations of roosting sites in the house, good working practices, the measures that are required to protect bats during the work and what do if bats are found. A copy of the licence or Class Licence will be available for inspection on site during all licensable works to be covered by it.
- 6.1.4** A 'soft strip' approach to the removal of the roof tiles will be adopted. Specifically, this will comprise the careful hand removal of the tiles using gloved hands under the direct supervision of an ecologist licensed by Natural England to handle bats, or by the Registered Consultant if working under the Class Licence. The tiles will be lifted and turned to check for bats before being removed from the roof.
- 6.1.5** In the event that bat(s) are discovered during the course of the work and the licensed ecologist is present, the ecologist would capture the bat(s) and transfer it/them directly to a bat box erected in advance of the works. In the event that building contractors encounter bats or evidence of bats e.g. droppings when not directly supervised, they will be advised to stop work immediately and call the licensed ecologist to site to attend to the bat and assess and record the evidence found.

- 6.1.6** In the longer term, the new side extension of the house will provide roosting opportunities suitable for common pipistrelle bats. An integral bat box (e.g. Schwegler 1FR bat tube or Habibat Bat Box) will be built into the brickwork at the north western side of the house (see Appendix 3).

7 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 – RAW BAT EMERGENCE SURVEY DATA

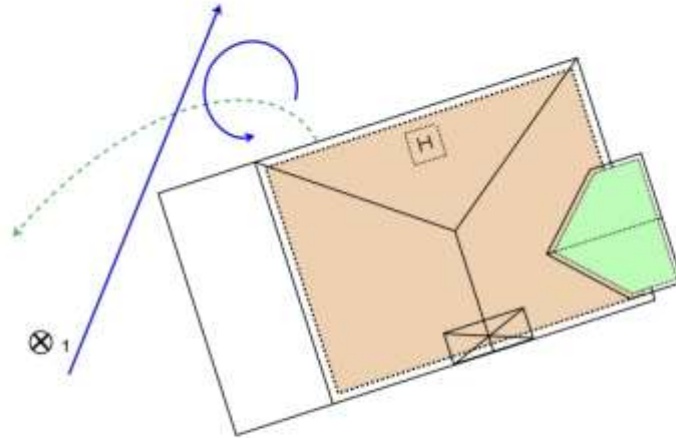
Evening Emergence Survey - 8th August 2017

Survey date: 08-08-2017 Location 1: Rear garden Surveyor: John Wenman Detector: Anabat SD2 with Batbox Duet Weather conditions: Dry; Overcast; Calm, 17°C Start time: 20:25 Sunset: 20:40 Finish time: 22:10		
Time	Species	Survey notes
20:44	Noctule	Pass heard but not seen
20:47	Noctule	Pass heard but not seen
20:49	Common pipistrelle	Emerg ed from corner on northern side of the house
20:52	Common pipistrelle	Foraging heard but not seen
21:11 – 21:16	Soprano pipistrelle	Foraging heard but not seen, and seen foraging in circle along northern side of the house
21:18	Soprano pipistrelle	Foraging flying along western side of the house, south-west to north-east direction
21:36	Noctule	Pass heard but not seen
21:50	Noctule	Pass heard but not seen
22:02	<i>Pipistrelle</i> sp.	Distant pass heard but not seen

Evening Emergence Survey - 30th August 2017

Survey date: 30-08-2017 Location 1: Rear garden Surveyor: Sarah Foot and Ayla Paul Detector: Elekon Batlogger M with Batbox Duet Weather conditions: Dry; Still; 100% cc, 18°C Start time: 19:41 Sunset: 19:56 Finish time: 21:26		
Time	Species	Survey notes
20:08	Common pipistrelle	Distant foraging heard but not seen
20:09	Noctule	Brief distant pass heard but not seen
20:09	Common pipistrelle	Distant foraging heard but not seen
20:10	Common pipistrelle	Distant foraging heard but not seen
20:17	Noctule	Foraging heard but not seen
20:44	Common pipistrelle	Pass heard but not seen
20:59	Soprano pipistrelle	Foraging heard but not seen
21:12	Common pipistrelle	Foraging heard but not seen
21:13	Common pipistrelle	Pass heard but not seen
21:15	Common pipistrelle	Foraging heard but not seen
21:16	Common pipistrelle	Foraging heard but not seen
21:18	<i>Myotis</i> sp.	Foraging heard but not seen
21:20	Common pipistrelle	Foraging heard but not seen
21:21 – 21:22	Common pipistrelle	Foraging heard but not seen
21:22	Common pipistrelle	Pass heard but not seen
21:25	Common pipistrelle	Pass heard but not seen
21:26	Common pipistrelle	Pass heard but not seen

APPENDIX 2 – BAT EMERGENCE SURVEY FINDINGS



- ⊗ n Surveyor location
- Common pipistrelle emergence
- Soprano pipistrelle flight paths

Drawn by:	Date	Scale:	58 St Peters Road, Earley RG6 1PH	
AP	Aug 2017	Not to scale	Emergence and Re-entry Bat Survey Findings	

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APPENDIX 3 – BAT ROOST PROVISION



Proposed NW Elevation

■ Integral bat box or tube on northwest facing gable end

Drawn by:	Date	Scale:	58 St Peters Road, Earley	
AP	Sept 2017	Not to scale	New Bat Roost Provision	

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