



Tree Surveys

BS5837 – Pre Planning – Mortgage – Risk Management & Prediction – Expert Witness

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL (BATS) AT HENLEY ROAD CEMETERY CAVERSHAM



**Prepared for:
Mr C Rumbold
Reading Borough Council
19 Bennet Road
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RG2 0QX**

11th July 2017

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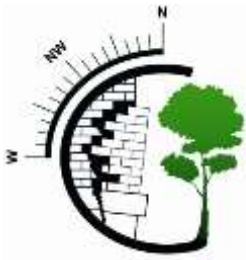
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The validity of this report ceases at the prescribed time limit or after two years from the site inspection, or if the site conditions change due to unspecified works that affect the site whichever is the sooner.



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Executive Summary

Tree Surveys was commissioned by Mr C Rumbold to carry out a preliminary ecological appraisal (for bats) at Henley Road Cemetery, All Hallows Road, Caversham, RG4 5LP. This is to support a forthcoming planning application to Reading Borough Council for the demolition of the toilet block and store room and the construction of a new office block within the footprint of the existing buildings.

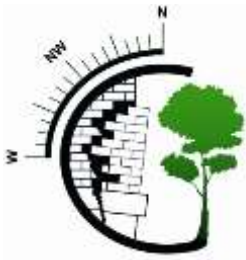
The site visit was carried out on Monday 3rd July 2017 at 13.00, during daylight hours. An internal and external inspection of the premises took place to look for bats and signs of bats.

The preliminary ecological appraisal (for bats) comprised a detailed search of the interior and exterior of the buildings for bats, signs of bats and features suitable for use by roosting bats. This includes droppings, internally or externally, scratch marks, rubbing and staining at exit holes, live or dead bats and other features such as missing tiles or mortar, gaps in the fascias or soffits; this list is not exhaustive.

The toilet block was in a good condition overall. There were, however, a number of gaps under the roof tiles, especially along the ridge which could provide potential access points for bats. Internally there were a small number of bat droppings, consistent with that of common pipistrelle bats, indicating that the toilet block is being used on an occasional basis for roosting by a solitary or small number of bats.

In line with best practice guidelines, three further dusk emergence or dawn return to roost surveys are recommended to assess the current status of roosting bats within the toilet block, in order to inform appropriate mitigation for the proposed works.

The store room was also in a good condition, with no gaps within the flat roof. There was no loft void and no evidence of bats externally or internally. The building was assessed as having very low potential to support bats and therefore no further survey is required.



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Instruction

Tree Surveys was instructed by Mr C Rumbold to conduct a preliminary ecological appraisal (for bats) at Henley Road Cemetery, All Hallows Road, Caversham, RG4 5LP to support a forthcoming planning application to Reading Borough Council.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The preliminary ecological appraisal (for bats) is designed to:

- Identify the presence/likely absence of bats within the buildings;
- To add confidence where no bats are found;
- Provide information on the status of bats using the buildings (currently or previously); and
- Establish whether further surveys, mitigation or a European Protected Species (EPS) licence is required.

The survey and report writing were carried out in accordance with Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition) (Bat Conservation Trust, 2016).

1.3 Proposed Works

The survey was commissioned in connection with a forthcoming planning application to Reading Borough Council that includes the demolition of the toilet block and store room currently on the cemetery site and construction of a new office block within the footprint of the existing buildings.

1.4 Surveyor Background and Experience

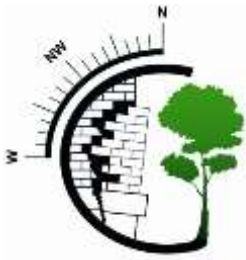
The preliminary ecological appraisal (for bats) and report was completed by Simon Holmes CEnv. He holds Class 2, 3 and 4 Bat Licenses (No. C137073). He has 27 years' experience of carrying out bat surveys and bat conservation work and has attended several training courses on bat surveys, bat call analysis and bat identification run by the Bat Conservation Trust, Wildwood Ecology and local bat groups.

2. LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY

2.1 Legislative Background

All species of British bat are protected under the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations (2010) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. This legislation makes it an offence to kill or injure a bat or interfere with any roosting or resting site. A bat roost is interpreted as "*any structure or place used for shelter or protection*" whether or not bats are present at the time. A summary of the main legislation and planning considerations are included at Appendix 1.

Seven species of bat are also Species of Principal Importance for nature conservation in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. This places a duty on all government departments to have regard for the conservation of these species and on the Secretary of State to further, or promote others to further, the conservation of these species.



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2.2 Planning Considerations

Government guidance to Local Planning Authorities stipulates the need to consider biodiversity and protected species during the consideration of planning applications. The NPPF makes clear that the planning system should help minimise the impacts that development can have on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible. In addition, the ODPM Circular 04/2005 states *“It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision”*.

Policy CS36 of the Reading Borough Core Strategy states *“Development should retain, protect and incorporate features of biodiversity or geological interest (including protected species and their habitats) found within the application site into their schemes. On sites with recognised biodiversity or geological value, development will not be permitted where there would be a direct or indirect adverse impact on the site, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that: -*

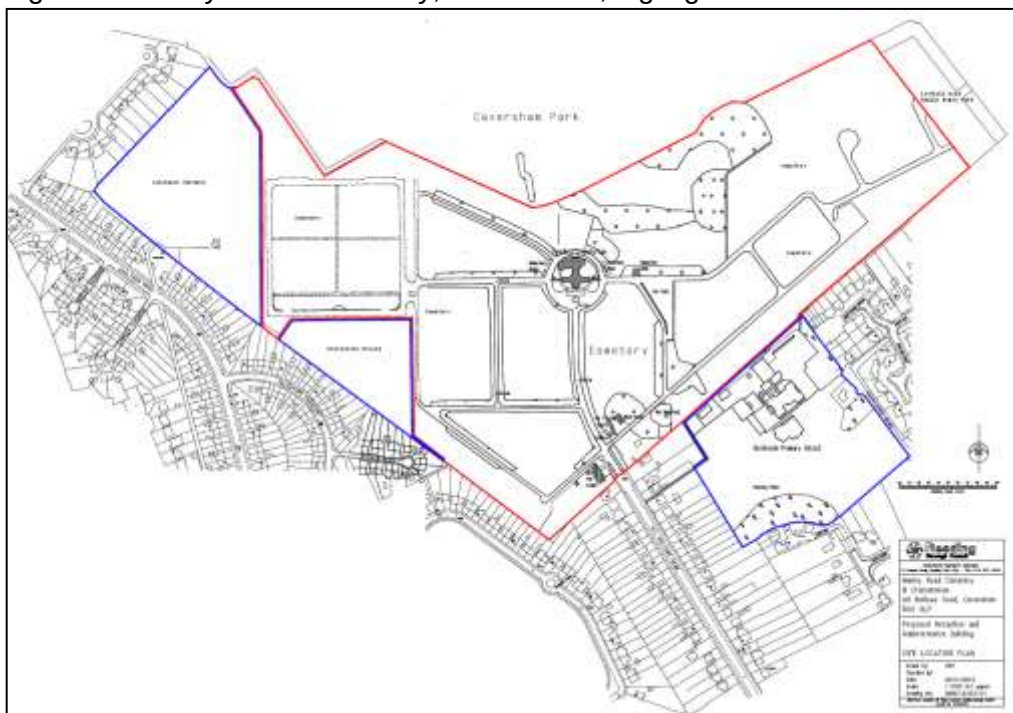
- i. The need for development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site; and*
- ii. Appropriate compensation, impact minimisation, mitigation and compensation are provided”*.

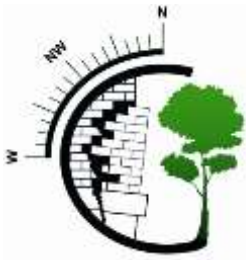
3. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

3.1 Site Location

The property is located at Grid Reference SU 726 755, see Figure 1 below. An overview of the immediate area is shown on Figure 2 on the following page.

Figure 1. Henley Road Cemetery, Caversham, highlighted.

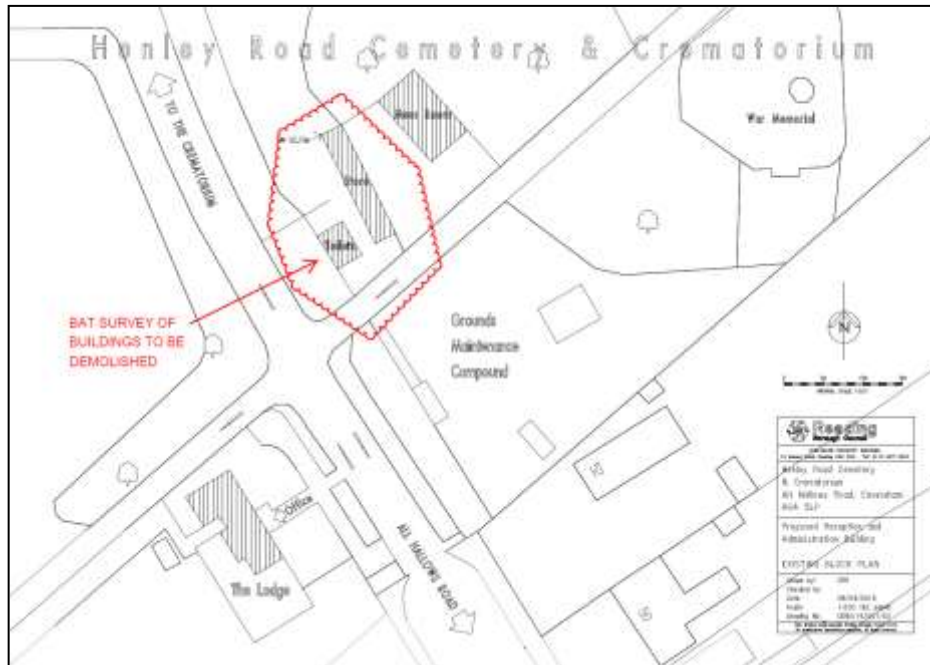




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Figure 2. Henley Road Cemetery, Caversham, overview of immediate survey area.

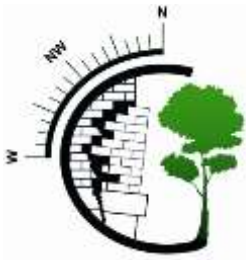


3.2 Site Description

The application site comprises two buildings. One is a toilet block (see Figure 3 below) and one a store room (see Figure 4 on the following page), with the remaining application site comprising a concrete pavement, small area of amenity grassland, shrubs and trees, which offers little in commuting and foraging habitat for bats. The wider area of the cemetery offers better habitat for bats including several bat boxes installed on the surrounding trees within the grounds of the cemetery and good foraging habitat locally.

Figure 3. Front view of the toilet block, Henley Road Cemetery, Caversham. 03.07.17





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Figure 4. The store room, Henley Road Cemetery, Caversham. 03.07.17



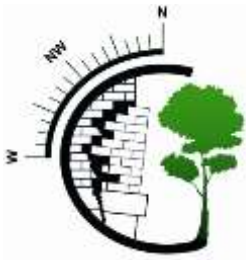
4. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

4.1 Pre-Survey (Desk Study) Data Search

Google Earth and MAGIC maps (magic.defra.gov.uk) website were used prior to the survey to determine the suitability of the surrounding habitat to support roosting bats and to identify any statutory designated sites within 1km of the site. In addition, a data search for records of bat species within 1km of the site by Berkshire and South Buckinghamshire Bat Group will be undertaken as part of further surveys for the site.

The site is situated within a sub-urban area of Caversham. The cemetery site is surrounded by housing developments, and to the north, large fields and pockets of woodland. Further afield are golf courses to the north of the site and the River Thames to the south, both of which provide good foraging and commuting habitat for bats, although no ecological corridors connect these areas to the site.

There are no statutory designated sites within 1km of the proposed development (Magic Maps 2017). A search of the Magic interactive website indicated that there is a record of a common pipistrelle bat roost within 1km of the proposed development which was destroyed under a European Protected Species License in 2011 (Reference: EPSM 2011-3175), increasing the likelihood of bat roosts being in the local area.



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4.2 Daylight Survey

A preliminary bat survey of Henley Road Cemetery, All Hallows Road, Caversham, RG4 5LP was carried out by Simon Holmes on Monday 3rd July 2017 at 13.00. The weather conditions for the survey were excellent, with bright sunshine and a temperature of 27 degrees. Equipment used included a high powered torch, a digital camera and binoculars.

During the survey, internal and external inspections of the buildings were carried out to identify any signs of occupation by bats and features that could offer potential roosting sites following standard survey guidelines. Features investigated included:

- Construction of the buildings – soffits, loft space, tiles/slates, lead flashings etc.
- Building condition – structure of roof and walls/ pointing.
- Internal conditions – microclimate stability, draughts etc.
- Access points – potential entry and exit points for bats.
- Roosting points – cracks and crevices, between underlay and roofing tiles/slates.

Field signs that would indicate the presence of bats were searched for. These included:

- Bat droppings on the floor and walls of the buildings.
- Feeding remains (particularly butterfly and moth wings).
- Evidence of urine and/or oily staining around possible roost entrances.
- Presence of areas cleared of cobwebs, although this is not always reliable.
- Where a breathable roofing membrane has been fitted staining on the membrane may suggest use by bats.
- Odour can sometimes suggest the present of bats.
- Squeaking and chattering can reveal bats roosting between the tiles and roofing underlay.

4.3 Constraints

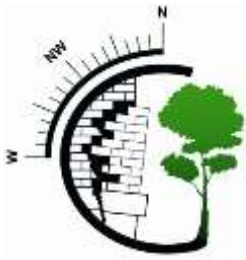
During the visit, full access to the site was made possible by the client and there were no constraints to the survey.

5. SURVEY FINDINGS

5.1 External Inspection

The external features of the buildings were examined for signs described in section 4.2. Windowsills, exposed features around the windows, fascia's and soffits, hanging tiles and walls were inspected for any evidence of bat droppings or staining.

The toilet block is brick built with a pitched roof, see Figure 5 on page 9. The roof is covered with clay tiles, none of which are missing, but there are several gaps under the tiles, especially along the ridge which could be utilised by bats, see Figure 6 on page 9. The roof verge is sealed with no obvious gaps and the soffit and fascias are sealed with no gaps, see Figure 7 on page 10. Both the gable ends have a louvered panel with access to the loft, which is likely to be very draughty and cold in the winter months, see Figure 8 on page 10. No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the external inspection of the toilet block, although there are numerous access points under the clay tiles which could provide access for bats.



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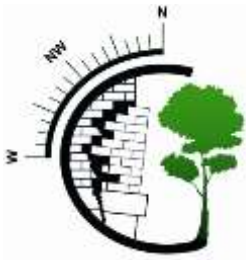
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Figure 5. Example of roof of toilet block. Henley Road Cemetery, Caversham. 03.07.17



Figure 6. Example of gaps under tiles. Henley Road Cemetery, Caversham. 03.07.17





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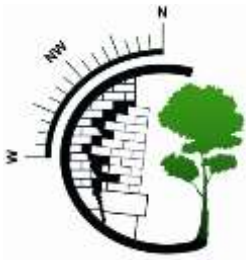
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Figure 7. Example of soffits and fascias. Henley Road Cemetery, Caversham. 03.07.17



Figure 8. Example of louvered panels. Henley Road Cemetery, Caversham. 03.07.17





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The store room is a brick built rectangular building, see Figure 9 below. The building has a flat concrete roof that is bitumen covered, with no gaps for bats to access. No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the external inspection of the store room.

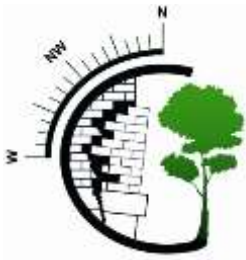
Figure 9. Example of store room construction, Henley Road Cemetery, Caversham.
03.07.17



5.2 Internal Inspection

An internal inspection of the toilet block and store room at Henley Road Cemetery were undertaken and examined for any signs of bats (as described in section 4.2).

The toilet loft can be accessed via a hatch in either end of the toilet block - both the ladies and men's toilets. The roof void was very small, not insulated or lit, although there is natural light spilling into the void, see Figure 10 on page 12. The loft is bitumen lined (see Figure 11 on page 12), with gaps in the bitumen joints and no bitumen over the ridge. A small number of bat droppings were recorded at the end of the male toilet block, which were of a similar size and consistency to those of common pipistrelle bat, see Figure 12 on page 13. The droppings were collected and sent away for DNA analysis.



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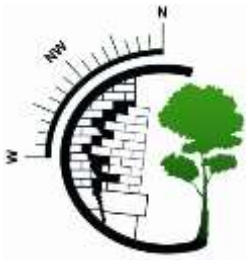
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Figure 10. Example of toilet block loft void, Henley Road Cemetery, Caversham, 03.07.17



Figure 11. Example of bitumen lining, Henley Road Cemetery, Caversham, 03.07.17





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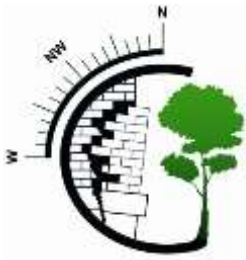
Figure 12. Example of bat droppings, Henley Road Cemetery, Caversham, 03.07.17



The store room had no internal loft space. There was access into the building via a UPVC door and a secondary access via wooden double doors at the opposite end. The room was illuminated internally and used for storage, see Figure 13 below. No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the internal inspection of the store room.

Figure 13. Internal view of store room, Henley Road Cemetery, Caversham, 03.07.17





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6. EVALUATION

The bat roost potential of the features within the site has been assessed with reference to the criteria laid out in the Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Mitchell-Jones, 2004). These criteria are listed on below with the features **highlighted in bold**.

The likelihood of bat roosts being present will be higher where structures:

- are of a pre-20th Century construction;
- are in a lowland rural setting;
- **have woodland, mature trees, species-rich grassland and/or water nearby;**
- have large dimension roof timbers with cracks, joints and holes;
- have numerous crevices in stonework and structures;
- **have an uneven roof covering with gaps, though not too draughty;**
- have hanging tiles or roof cladding, especially on south-facing walls;
- **have a roof warmed by the sun;**
- are disused or little used; largely undisturbed;
- provide appropriate hibernation conditions, such as abandoned mines, tunnels, kilns, or fortifications; or
- Recent or historical records of bats on the site, or bat roosts in the general area.

The likelihood of bat roosts being present will be lower where structures:

- are in an urban setting with little green space;
- **are subject to heavy disturbance (constant movement due to draughts and noise, also unstable microclimate);**
- **have a small, cluttered roof void (particularly for brown long-eared);**
- are of a modern construction with few gaps or crevices that bats can fly or crawl through (though pipistrelle bats may still be present);
- are comprised of prefabricated steel or sheet materials; (some sections)
- are active industrial premises.

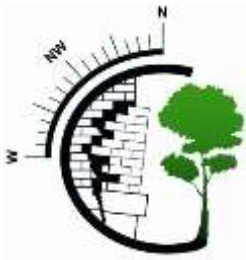
Please note that the above list provides generic screening criteria only and there are exceptions to consider.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Interpretation

No live or dead bats were recorded during the internal and external inspection of the toilet block or store room.

The store room was in a good condition, had a well fitted bitumen flat roof with no gaps for bats to enter. There were no fascias or soffits and no loft space. There was no evidence of bats externally or internally and the building has very low potential to support roosting bats. No further survey is required on the store room.



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The toilet block was in a generally good condition, although there were numerous gaps under the roof tiles, especially along the ridge line which could be utilised by bats. There were a small number of bat droppings, consistent with common pipistrelle droppings, at one end of the toilet block loft void, suggesting that the building is being used as a day roost by a solitary or small number of bats.

Based on the above, it is recommended that three further dusk emergence and/or return to roost surveys are undertaken on the toilet block between May and August, to assess the current status of roosting bats, in order to inform a European Protected Species License issued by Natural England and appropriate mitigation for the proposed works.

7.2 Contingency Plan

If, for whatever reason, there is a time delay of greater than 12 months between this survey and the commencement of work, then the survey should be repeated as the condition of the building may have changed and become more suitable to support roosting bats.

8. REFERENCES

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

HM Government (2010) The Conservation and Habitat Regulations.

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Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (1999). Bat Workers' Manual (2nd Edition). Joint Nature Conservancy Committee, Peterborough.

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

Reading Borough Local Development Framework, Core Strategy, 2008.

9. QUERIES

Any queries regarding this report should be addressed, in the first instance, to Tree Surveys:

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