



518a Shepherds Lodge, Stag Park, Petworth, West Sussex, GU28 9LT

Tel: 01798 342 610 - E-Mail: info@azure-ecology.co.uk - www.ecologyco-op.co.uk

Bat Scoping Survey; 60 Redlands Road, Reading, RG1 5HU

Author: Ryan Walker

Reviewed By: Paul Whitby

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Introduction

The Ecology Co-op was instructed to undertake a bat scoping survey upon the above property (Fig. 1 & 2). It is proposed that this bungalow is to be extended upon the western elevation and subsequently the western facing roof pitch altered. The survey work detailed within this report is therefore required to collect information relating to the possible presence of roosting bats within the bungalow.



Figure 1. Google Earth screen grab of the wider location of 60 Redlands Road. Figure orientated north to south.

All species of bats within the UK are UK and EU protected species, protected via The Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations (2010) and also the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), as amended. Therefore, it is 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 by bats" whether or not bats are present at the time. Details of legislation and legal protection afforded to all species of British bats are given in Appendix 1.

The results of this survey will guide any necessary mitigation to ensure that no individuals or populations of bats and their roosting habitat are negatively affected by the proposed works, and therefore no offence is committed under UK and EU wildlife legislation.



Survey Methods

The bat scoping survey was undertaken on the 3rd of June 2015 by Dr Ryan Walker, MCIEEM, CEnv (Natural England license holder: CLS0 1385 - Bat Survey Level 2) following best practice survey techniques as outlined by the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT)¹.

The roof void of the bungalow was searched for signs of bat use such as scratch marks, staining from bat fur, bat droppings and insect feeding remains (e.g., wing cases) as well as bats themselves. Externally, the western facing elevation of the bungalow was surveyed, making use of a high powered torch, endoscope and binoculars where necessary for possible entry points, roosting crevices, evidence of staining, scratch marks and bat droppings.

Results

The property is located within a suburban setting, surrounded by other similar modern properties supporting moderately sized gardens. The local environment supports moderate foraging habitat, within gardens and along tree lines, for a number of the commoner species of bats often associated with roosting within domestic dwellings.

The small, modern brick bungalow supports two areas of pitched roof (Fig. 2). The roof is clad in modern, concrete, interlocking roof tiles (Fig. 2). These tiles are well fitting and devoid of gaps that could be considered suitable for potentially supporting crevice roosting bats. The modern PVC soffits are well fitting and devoid of gaps (Fig. 3). The brick work is in good condition, whereby there are no gaps within the bricks or masonry. All of the external aspects of the bungalow upon the west facing elevation are in good condition, devoid of gaps, and unsuitable for potentially supporting roosting space for crevice roosting bats.

The bungalow supports two roof voids. The void within the northern section of the bungalow is large, measuring approximately 3m in floor to apex height and approximately 9x12m in floor space. The void supports a timber frame and is internally clad in bitumen roofing felt (Fig. 4). There are no obvious potential entry or exit points within the void, that could be used by roosting bats. There is no evidence to suggest that the void has been used by roosting bats within the recent past.

The second void within the southern section of the bungalow is small, measuring approximately 0.5m floor to apex height and 1.5x9m floor area. The void is constructed of the same materials as the larger void and devoid of potential entry/exit gaps. There is no evidence to suggest that this void has been used by roosting bats within the recent past.

¹ Hundt, L (2012) *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines, 2nd edition*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.



Figure 2. The west facing elevation proposed for development within the bungalow at 60 Redlands Road.



Figure 3. Well fitting, PVC soffits upon the west facing elevation of the bungalow at 60 Redlands Road.



Figure 4. The larger, timber framed roof void within the northern section of the house at 60 Redlands Road.

Discussion and Recommendations

The results of the survey suggest that the west facing elevations and roof voids of the bungalow at 60 Redlands Road, proposed for development, have a negligible potential to support roosting bats. Therefore no further survey work or mitigation in relation to bats is recommended.

Should you need any further advice on the information provided above please do not hesitate to contact us.



Bats

All species of British bat are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended through inclusion in Schedule V. All bat species in the UK are also included in Schedule II of the Habitats Regulations 2010 which transpose Annex II of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora ("EC Habitats Directive") which defines European protected species of animals.

Bat species are afforded further protection by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000; and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Under the above legislation it is an offence to:

- kill, injure or take an individual;
- possess any part of an individual either alive or dead;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place or structure used by these species for shelter, rest, protection or breeding;
- intentionally or recklessly disturb these species whilst using any place of shelter or protection; or
- deliberate disturbance in such a way as to be 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;
- keep (possess), transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange, any live or dead bat, or any part of, or anything derived from a bat.

It is also an offence to set and use articles capable of catching, injuring or killing bats (for example a trap or poison), or knowingly cause or permit such an action. In the case all species of British bat there is also protection under *Schedule 6 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) relating specifically to trapping and direct pursuit of these species.

A European Protected Species License (EPSL) in relation to bats is required from Natural England for any work that would result in an otherwise unlawful activity (e.g. damage to a bat roost). A license can only be issued to permit otherwise prohibited acts if Natural England are satisfied that all of the following three tests are met:

- The proposal is for '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';
- There is no satisfactory alternative; and
- The action authorised by the license will not be detrimental to the maintenance of bat populations at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

A bat roost is defined by the Bat Conservation Trust publication *Bat Surveys—Good Practice Guidelines 2nd Edition* as "*the resting place of a bat*"¹. Generally however, the word roost is interpreted as "*any structure or place, which any wild bat uses for shelter or protection.*"



60 REDLANDS ROAD

Bats tend to re-use the same roosts; therefore legal opinion is guided by recent case law precedents, that a roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time. This can include for summer roosts, used for breeding; or winter roosts, used for hibernating.