

Midland Ecology

Working with you

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Bat Mitigation Strategy

March 2022

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1.0 Background

Survey Findings

On the first (dusk) survey, four bats emerged from under tiles on the southeast, southwest and northern façade of B1, section 1. Two further common pipistrelle exited through large holes in the roof of B1. Two of the bats were not echolocating, but flight pattern consistent with pipistrelle species, and the other two were confirmed as common pipistrelle by their calls. No bats emerged from B2.

On the second (dawn) survey, two common pipistrelle was observed returning to roost within B1 through a large hole in the roof. Use of different entry and exit points is not uncommon; nor is movement of common pipistrelles from one roosting place to another.

During the final (dusk) survey, a single bat was recorded emerging from the second-floor window of the southwest façade of section one of B1. The bat was not echolocating however, the flight pattern and timing of the emergence was consistent with pipistrelle species.

The findings suggest the presence of a summer roost for a low number of male and/or non-breeding female common pipistrelle bats.

Bat activity levels on site were found to be moderate, with heavier use of the courtyard to the southwest of building 1, it was noted that this area was sheltered from the wind from the adjacent fields.

Potential Impact

As the proposal calls for conversion of the building 1, the common pipistrelle day roost present within it would be destroyed, with the potential for direct harm to any bats present during works.

Bat activity levels on site were found to be moderate, with heavier use of the courtyard area to the southwest of building 1. Any increased lighting levels on this area have the potential to disrupt bat foraging and/or commuting routes.

Recommendations

A European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) from Natural England will be required in order to legally carry out the proposed works to building 1. The recommended mitigation is two crevice-type bat boxes (Schwegler 2F or equivalent), mounted at suitable locations on site; on retained trees.

It is recommended that any lighting design follows the protocols outlined in the Institute for Lighting Engineers document *"Guidance Note 08/18 "Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK: Bats and the Built Environment Series" (2018)"* to minimise disturbance and sky-glow across the site; and onto the buildings in particular.

2.0 Bat Mitigation Strategy (Reasonable Avoidance Measures)

2.1 Introduction

In order to ensure that bats are not harmed during conversion works and that there are no adverse effects on bat roosts or on wider bat populations, the method statement contains the following elements:

- Provision of a bat boxes;
- Toolbox talk to contractors;
- Timing of works / weather conditions;
- Working methods to ensure minimal disturbance to bats, and avoidance of killing or injury to bats;
- Methods to be followed in the event of a bat being discovered during other works;
- Use of approved materials and timber treatment chemicals, if required; and
- Requirements in relation to lighting.

2.2 General

A site agent will be appointed by the contractor to ensure that the details of this method statement are complied with; copies of which must be available on site. Contractors will be given a “toolbox talk” by a suitably qualified and licensed Ecologist at the commencement of works, so that they are aware of the particular issues relating to this site and their responsibilities in the event of a bat being found in the absence of an Ecologist (see Section 2.6 below).

2.3 Provision of bat boxes/bricks

Prior to commencement of works, a Schwegler 2F bat box (or equivalent) will be installed at a suitable location on site (this must be a permanent and undisturbed location) at a height of between 3m and 5m and preferably facing SE, S or SW. Location to be agreed with the Ecologist prior to installation, as once installed this will remain in place for a minimum of 5 years. This box is to provide temporary shelter for any bats encountered during works.

In addition, two crevice-type bat boxes (Schwegler 2F or equivalent) will be installed onto retained trees on site; facing between southeast, south and southwest, at the locations shown in Appendix 1.

2.4 Timing of works / weather conditions

Due to assessed absence of hibernation or maternity roosts on site, restrictions are not placed on the months during which works can take place. Due the potential for bats to be encountered however, works to the roof will only be undertaken in mild weather conditions; avoiding high winds and heavy rain.

2.5 Working Methods

The actions below constitute 'licensable activity'; i.e. they are actions that, unless carried out under a mitigation licence issued by Natural England, would constitute a criminal offence. The following will therefore only take place once such a licence has been granted:

The roofs; their tiles, soffits/fascias, and and/all other roof components due for removal will be stripped by hand (also known as 'soft demolition'). Immediately prior to the commencement of such works, a licensed (minimum level 2) bat Ecologist will, using ladders, endoscope and a torch, check the crevices, tops of the walls and roofing timbers to look for any roosting bats; so far as it is safe to do so. The bat Ecologist will continue to supervise for the duration of soft demolition works to these areas. Should any roosting bats be found then all works will temporarily cease while the bats are captured by the licensed bat ecologist. Any captured bats will be transferred by hand to the pre-installed bat box (see 2.3 above).

2.6 Procedures in the Event of Discovering a Bat in the Absence of an Ecologist

All site workers will be made aware of the possibility of finding bats, and the procedure to follow should they be found when the Ecologist is not on site.

If at any point a bat is discovered, contractors will stop work immediately and telephone an ecological professional qualified to deal with the species. Telephone numbers of such will be held on site (e.g. Midland Ecology 07854473385).

Should any bats fall out of structures or be injured, they will be gently placed in a secure ventilated box (e.g. a cardboard box with small holes) by the contractor and left in a cool dark place, until appropriate advice can be sought. Bats must never be handled without gloves. Should any staff be bitten, then this must be flagged immediately, as post-exposure treatment will be required.

2.7 Sign-Off

Following completion of works, the supervising Ecologist will provide written confirmation (by letter, email or other suitable media) to confirm that this method statement has been complied with and that the mitigation boxes for bats were installed correctly.

2.8 Lighting

It is important that any lighting design follows the protocols outlined in the Bat Conservation Trust / ILP Guidance Note 08/18 'Bats and artificial lighting in the UK'. In this instance compliance with those protocols is to be achieved by the absence of window openings on the northeast elevation of the new building. It is important that any additional external lighting also complies with this guidance.

Appendix 1 – Locations for bat mitigation features



Appendix 2 - bat mitigation product specifications

2F Schwegler Bat Box (General Purpose)



The Schwegler 2F has a removable front panel.

It is manufactured from long-lasting Woodcrete, and will last for at least 20 - 25 years, making it suitable for long-term mitigation projects. Woodcrete is breathable and maintains a stable temperature. Painted black to absorb warmth. It also provides a rough surface for bats to cling to and climb up.

The 2F bat box can be sited on a tree or building and is best positioned at a height of between 3 to 6 metres in an open sunny position.

Dimensions: 33 x 16 cm