

Our Ref: 8098/KM/REH/RG

Ray Pearson
Dandara
KD Tower
Cotterells
Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire
HP1 1FW

Issued via email: rpearson@dandara.com

25th July 2018

Dear Ray,

Bentletts Scrap Yard, Laddingford – Bat Report

FPCR Environment & Design Ltd. were commissioned by Dandara to undertake ecology surveys, specifically for bats, on a two storey listed building referred to as the 'Pest House' (B5a) to support an application for listed building consent.

The Pest House has listed building consent and full planning permission. Both expired in June 2018. The planning permission (ref: 14/504397/FULL) was for '*demolition of existing single storey extension and replace with erection of single storey pitched roof extension inclusive of external and internal alterations; demolition of rear single storey container shed replace with a garage*'.

The building is located at the entrance to Bentletts Scrap Yard, Laddingford, Kent which has planning permission (planning reference 17/506535/FULL) for the erection of 28 dwellings and associated landscaping and is currently undergoing development.

This letter details the results from a building inspection and nocturnal bat surveys carried out by FPCR ecologists on the above building in 2018. Additionally details of relevant mitigation are provided based on the results of the surveys.

Ecological Background

Previous ecological surveys had been undertaken throughout 2014, 2015 and 2016 by Greenspace Ecological Solutions and M. Newcombe. The resulting reporting includes the following documents:

- Greenspace Ecological Solutions, *Extended Phase 1 Habitat, Bat Scoping Survey and Habitat Suitability Index Assessment*, Sept 2014;
- M. Newcombe, *Bentletts Yard Laddingford Kent Bat Survey*, March 2015;
- Greenspace Ecological Solutions, *Receptor Site Survey and Enhancement Plan*, Jan 2016; and
- FPCR, *Ecological Appraisal and Protected Species Report*, Dec 2017.

FPCR Environment and Design Limited.
Registered in England No: 7128076. Registered Office: Lockington Hall, Lockington, Derby DE74 2RH

Details of Directors and Associates are available on our website.

Offices also at
Lockington Hall, Lockington, Derby DE74 2RH Tel: 01509 672772
Addlepool Business Centre Clyst St George, Exeter, Devon EX3 0NR Tel: 01392 874499
and The National Agri-Food Innovation Campus, Sand Hutton, York YO41 1LZ Tel: 01904 406112



In summary the above surveys identified the Pest House (B5a) as having low potential to support roosting bats.

Methodology

Internal / External Building Assessment

The building exterior was visually assessed on the 16th November 2017 for potential bat access points and evidence of bat activity. Features such as small gaps under barge/soffit/fascia boards, raised or missing ridge tiles and gaps at gable ends, which have potential as access points, were sought. Evidence that bats actively used potential access points includes staining within or under gaps or the presence of bat droppings, a note being made wherever these were present. Where access to potential access point was possible a full inspection using an endoscope was completed to identify current or previous evidence of use such as the physical presence of bats or bat droppings. Indicators that potential access points had not recently been used included the presence of cobwebs and general detritus within the gap.

The interior of the buildings, including roof voids where present and accessible, were also visually assessed for evidence of bat activity and/or for the potential to be used by bats. Evidence of a roost was determined as the presence of a dead or live bat(s), concentrated piles or scattered droppings, food remains such as insect wing fragments as well as scratch marks and/or staining.

The above assessments were completed by a licensed bat worker from FPCR (Natural England Licence Number: 2015-11905-CLS-CLS).

Nocturnal Surveys

Nocturnal bat surveys were subsequently undertaken by suitably experienced ecologists from FPCR including by a licenced bat worker (Natural England Licence number 2015-14594-CLS) in June / July 2018. The nocturnal surveys were conducted in appropriate conditions, i.e. with ambient temperature exceeding 10°C, little wind and no rain (*Table 1*), in line with best practice guidelines¹.

Table 1. Survey Information

Ref / Date	Sunrise / Sunset	Conditions
Survey 1 06 June 2018 Dawn Re-entry	04:45	10°C, 90% cloud, moderate breeze, no rain
Survey 2 26 June 2018 Dawn Re-entry	04:44	13°C, no cloud, still, no rain.
Survey 3 18 July 2018 Dusk Emergence	21:05	22°C, 40% cloud, still, no rain

Surveyors were positioned at either end of the Pest House building with clear views observing areas of the building identified with potential roost features. Surveys were undertaken from 15 minutes prior to sunset to 2 hours following sunset, and from 2 hours prior to and 15 minutes following sunrise (this methodology takes in to account the BCT guidelines).

Surveyors used Wildlife Acoustic Inc. Echo Meter Touch bat detectors in conjunction with Echo Meter Touch app and Apple Inc. iPad during these surveys to aid species identification.

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

RESULTS

Internal and External Building Assessment

Building B5a, previously assessed as providing low potential for roosting bats was re-inspected for any evidence or presence of roosting bats.

No internal or external evidence of bats was observed in association with this building (see Table 2), therefore it is still considered to have low potential to support roosting bats. Evidence was noted of rats nesting within the area beneath the tiles/underlining and utilising the void (rat droppings were present throughout) therefore it is considered unlikely that bats would successfully be able to roost within this building due to the likelihood of disturbance and predation.



Photograph 1. Pest House Building Front View and 2. Back View with Lean to (B5b)



Photograph 3. Window on Eastern Aspect (note lifted tiles in top corners)

Table 2. Bat Building Assessment

Building number	Building Description.	Structural Features Present						Other Structural Features of Note	Potential Bat Access Points	Internal Features	Bat Potential and evidence recorded
		Gables	Barge Boards	Soffit Boards	Fascia Boards	Flashing	Roof Void				
B5a	Pest House – Two storeys abandoned listed residential building. Gable and hipped roof with clay tiles, hanging tiles present.	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Timber window frames. Porch with pitched tiled roof. Brick chimney.	Broken window on eastern aspect. Gaps on gable, missing mortar where beams extend out of the roof. Gaps under tiles across void, and missing bricks into area beneath tiles on western aspect and under eaves.	Void present timber beams, loft insulation and black felt underlining tiles. Smaller void beneath hipped area of roof inaccessible area as beams rotten. Rats present throughout.	Low
B5b	Pest House-Lean to on eastern aspect with a sloping bitumen felt lined roof.	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	North aspect covered in ivy.	No gaps noted.	Small void between the ceiling and the sloping lean to timber roof. No underlining present. Cobwebs present throughout.	Negligible
B6	Pre-fabricated porta cabin, flat roof	N	N	N	N	N	N	Glazed windows.	Open windows covered in mesh on northern aspect. Open on eastern aspect.	No void or underlining.	Negligible

Nocturnal Surveys – see Figure 1 for Surveyor LocationsSurvey 1 - 6th June 2018 – Dawn Re-entry

Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* activity was recorded by both surveyors, with most contacts comprising low numbers of passes. At 04:10 Surveyor B saw 2 common pipistrelle bats foraging in the back garden of an adjacent property, with multiple passes recorded. At 04:18 a soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* was observed by Surveyor B repeatedly flying between the eastern side of the Pest House (B5a) and the adjacent residential building and was seen to land on a hanging tile above the top left of the window however flew off and did not enter a gap.

Survey 2 - 26th June 2018 – Dawn Re-entry

Low levels of common pipistrelle, noctule *Nyctalus noctula* and unidentified *Myotis* sp. activity were recorded by both surveyors. At 04:02 Surveyor B observed multiple passes by a common pipistrelle adjacent the window on the eastern side of the Pest House (B5a) and at 04:04 a common pipistrelle was seen landing on a hanging tile in the top right corner and entering a gap beneath (see Figure 1). No further bat activity was recorded.

Survey 3 - 18th July 2018 – Dusk Emergence

Surveyor B observed one soprano pipistrelle that emerged from beneath a hanging tile in the top left corner of the window on the eastern side of the Pest House (B5a) at 21:29 (24 minutes after sunset). No further bats were observed emerging from the Pest House (B5a). Both surveyors recorded relatively low levels of common and soprano pipistrelle and unidentified *Myotis* sp. activity in the local area.

Nesting Birds

During 2018 birds, including starlings, were observed nesting within the Pest House building (B5a) in gaps beneath the roof and potentially within ivy growing on the porch. Structural vegetation, including trees and scrub within the garden also offer some nesting opportunities.

DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Buildings B5a is to be retained with a full refurbishment which will affect the external areas including the roof and hanging tiles on the walls. The single storey extension (B5b) is to be removed.

Legal Protection of Bats

All UK species of bat are listed on the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 making it illegal to deliberately disturb any such animal or damage / destroy a breeding site or roosting place of any such animal. Bats are also afforded full legal protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (*as amended*). Under this legislation it is illegal to recklessly or intentionally kill, injure or take a species of bat or recklessly or intentionally damage or obstruct access to or destroy any place of shelter or protection or disturb any animal whilst they are occupying such a place of shelter or protection. Some bat species, including soprano pipistrelle, are Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC).

During the surveys single common and soprano pipistrelles were observed roosting beneath hanging tiles on the eastern side of the Pest House (B5a) with no more than one bat confirmed roosting during any one survey. The presence of this bat roost is a statutory constraint to the works on the building. The destruction of the roost will therefore require a European Protected Species (EPS) licence or Low Impact Licence from Natural England to legitimise the works.

Buildings B5b and B6 are considered to have negligible potential to support roosting bats with no evidence recorded during nocturnal surveys. The removal of these buildings will not impact the roost site and therefore the presence of a roost within B5a is not a constraint to their demolition.

Appropriate mitigation for 'individual bats of common species' will be provided (outlined below). This will be in accordance with the Bat Mitigation Guidelines² which states the following: "*Flexibility over provision of bat boxes, access to new buildings etc. No conditions about timing or monitoring*".

Mitigation strategy

The mitigation strategy proposed to maintain the favourable conservation status of the species identified includes:

- Provision of 3 x Schwegler 2F / 2FN or 1FF bat boxes, to be installed prior to works commencing on suitable tree(s) within the development (*Figure 1*).

² Mitchell-Jones A.J. 2004. *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.

- Prior to the start of works all contractors will be inducted by a licensed or experienced bat ecologist to make them aware of the possible presence of bats, their legal protection and of best working practices to avoid harming bats. A copy of the EPS / Low Impact Licence will remain available on site at all times.
- A destructive search of B5a (Pest House) will be completed, under supervision from a licensed bat worker. This will comprise the careful removal of materials which could provide suitable bat roosting habitat. The removal of features of note include roof tiles (ridge and 1m down on both sides, eaves and 1m up on both aspects), lead flashing, fascia boards, chimneys and hanging tiles. Any bats observed (within the conditions of the licence) will be captured where possible and placed into the on-site mitigation if present or suitably contained until they can be released in the evening.
- Artificial illumination of bat boxes and adjacent habitat by external lighting / street lighting will be avoided.

Nesting Birds

The principal legislation afforded to the protection of UK wild birds is the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (*as amended*). Under this legislation all birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law and it is an offence, with certain exceptions to recklessly or intentionally kill take or injure a wild bird, to take, damage or destroy a nest of any wild bird while in use or being built and to take or destroy the egg of a wild bird.

Vegetation clearance and construction works are likely to disturb and otherwise adversely impact nesting birds. The following measures are therefore recommended:

- Removal of any vegetation / building features suitable to support nesting birds should take place outside of the bird breeding season (March to September inclusive) to protect nesting birds and prevent an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (*as amended*). If vegetation / building features are proposed for removal during the bird breeding season a nesting bird check should first be completed by a suitably qualified ecologist. If an active nest is identified present then the nest will remain in situ and an appropriate buffer stipulated by the ecologist adopted until the young have fledged.
- Any woody nesting habitat should be protected with Heras fencing during construction to avoid accidental damage or disturbance.

Starlings (a Species of Principal Importance) are nesting within B5a and their nest site will be lost, it is recommended that a starling nest box is installed on a suitable tree (see *Figure 1*) in advance of demolition. The box should be located at least 2.5m above ground, facing between north and east, thus avoiding strong sunlight / winds.

Yours sincerely



Katie May
Ecologist
FPCR Environment and Design Ltd
katie.may@fpcr.co.uk

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Key

- Development Site Boundary
- Consented Building Application
- Hedge with trees - species-poor
- Broadleaved trees
- Hardstanding
- Buildings - Negligible Bat Potential
- Pest House (B5a) - Low Bat Potential
- Amenity grassland
- Ephemeral / short perennial
- Indicative Location for Bat Boxes
- Indicative Location for Starling Box
- Scrub - scattered
- Surveyor Locations (ref A or B)
- Broadleaved tree

