

ECE PLANNING

Land at Lime Tree Close, East Preston, West Sussex

- Bat Emergence / Re-entry Survey Report

Planning Issue

Prepared by	NW
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The Old Bank, 34 South Street, Tarring, Worthing, West Sussex, BN14 7LH
T. 01903 216033 E. lizard.landscape@btconnect.com W. lizardlandscapeecology.com

SUMMARY

ECE planning has commissioned Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology to undertake a Bat Emergence / Re-entry Survey (*BES*) of the building at Lime Tree Close, East Preston, West Sussex (*Grid Reference: TQ 068 025— hereafter referred to as 'the site'*). Further to the recommendation within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Survey (*PEA*) conducted on the 22nd February 2018.

The PEA identified a small number of potential bat access points including gaps beneath roof tiles and in soffits to the existing building fabric, in addition to small number of old bat droppings in the loft. One survey visit was undertaken on 10th May 2018 (*dusk*).

No bats were seen to emerge from the building on site during the bat emergence /re-entry survey. One common pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) was observed foraging approximately 50m off-site exhibiting a low amount of local activity.

It is the opinion of the surveyors that the development proposals stand a '*negligible*' risk of committing an offence as stipulated under *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)*. Due to the lack of confirmed bat emergence and the lack of anything suggestive of a bat emergence, a detailed bat mitigation strategy such as bat roost replacement / re-provision would not be proportionate to the predicted impact of this planning application. It is further recommended that no bat-related restriction be placed upon the timetable for the development.

Suggestions for habitat enhancement which could be incorporated within the scheme are included in **Section 7.0** of this report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology has been commissioned by ECE Planning to undertake a Bat Emergence Survey of the building at Lime Tree Close, East Preston, West Sussex (*Grid Reference: TQ 068 025— hereafter referred to as 'the site'*).

1.2 The *BES* was recommended as a follow-up to the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Survey (*PEA*) conducted on 22nd February 2018. The *BES* assessed a small number of potential bat access points including gaps beneath roof tiles and in soffits to the existing building fabric. No recent evidence of bats using the access points was noted. However, a small number of old bat droppings were noted within the loft. Considering the generally poor surrounding habitat, this building has been assessed as offering 'low' bat roost suitability. 1 no. survey visit was recommended to be undertaken during the optimal survey season (*May-August*) and in suitable weather conditions (*+10°C, dry, calm*) to ascertain the presence / likely absence of a bat roost within the building.

1.3 Due to the buildings offering 'low' suitability one survey visit was undertaken on 10th May 2018 at *Dusk*.

1.4 The analysis contained within this report was undertaken and prepared by Niall Walkden (*Project Ecologist, Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology*). The field survey data presented in this report has been collected by Niall Walkden and George Sayer (BSc (Hons) *Project Ecologist, Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology*). This report has been reviewed by Joshua Peacock (*BA (Hons) MALA, CMLI; Associate Landscape Planner; Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology*).

Site Overview / Context

1.7 The site is a large residential plot and comprises an existing building, hardstanding, amenity grass, introduced scrub and scattered trees. The site is approximately 0.2 hectares (*ha*) in size and is approximately 8.0 metres (*m*) above sea level. The site is bounded by roads and residential properties to all aspects.

- 1.8 Soils on site are described as freely draining slightly acid loamy soil. There are no ponds or areas of woodland located within or immediately adjacent the site.

Surrounding Landscape

- 1.6 The wider landscape is dominated by urban development with the town of East Preston extending for at least 500.0 metres to all aspects. Beyond the urban sprawl, the coast line is approximately 1.0km to the south whilst the Ferring Strategic Gap is located 890m east. Beyond the A259 to the north the land opens to a matrix of arable and pastoral farmland.
- 1.7 There are no waterbodies located within 500.0m of the site. The nearest area of woodland listed on the National Forest Inventory is a 0.7Ha plot located 130m north-west.

Development Proposals

- 1.8 It is understood that the development proposals include the demolition of the existing building followed by the construction of new residential units with associated areas of parking and gardens.

2.0 SCOPE OF THE SURVEY

- 2.1 The aim of this bat emergence survey has been:
- *To identify all bat roosts found on site; particularly in the region affected by the development proposals;*
 - *To establish which species are using the site and for what purpose – roosting / foraging / navigation;*
 - *To identify features / habitats / areas on site that are of particular importance to local bats;*
 - *To use the information collected to inform an appropriate course of avoidance / mitigation / compensation / enhancement.*

3.0 BAT LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY

- 3.1 All species of bat and their breeding sites or resting places (*bat roosts*) are protected under *Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)*. It is an offence for anyone to disturb, deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat. It is an offence to damage or destroy a breeding or resting place of a bat. It is also an offence to have in one's possession or control, any live or dead *European Protected Species*, or deliberately obstruct access to a bat roost.
- 3.2 Disturbance is defined as acts that are likely to impair the ability of an *EPS* to survive, breed or reproduce, or rear or nurture their young. In the case of hibernating and migratory species, this factor applies to their ability to hibernate or migrate. Disturbance is also an offence if it is likely to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the *EPS*.
- 3.3 A *Natural England European Protected Species (EPS) Licence* where applicable is required to permit otherwise unlawful activities and can only be granted for certain purposes under *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010)*. Development activities are included within these licensable activities.
- 3.4 The *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* sets out government policy regarding biodiversity and development. Under the *NPPF* the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when considering planning applications which may, if carried out, result in harm to the habitat or species.
- 3.5 In summary, with regard to ecology and biodiversity, the *NPPF* requires that the planning system and planning policies should:
- *Minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible;*
 - *Explore and encourage opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments;*
 - *Refuse planning permission if significant harm cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for.*

4.0 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 One survey visits were undertaken on 10th May 2018 in accordance with guidelines outlined in *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (BCT 2016)*. Each bat surveyor was assigned a survey point within the site area to best observe and record the level of bat usage of the habitat and features believed to be most relevant to the development proposals.
- 4.2 Two survey points were utilised during the survey. **Survey Point SP01** was located to the north-east of **building while Survey Point SP02** was located to the south-west of **building**.
- 4.3 The dusk survey started 15 minutes before sunset and terminated 1.5 hours after. Bats were identified using heterodyne and frequency division bat detectors Anabat SD2 and Bat Box Duet, and sound analysis was undertaken using AnalookW and BatScan 9.

Table No. 01 – Bat Survey Details

Date	10.05.18
Survey Type	Dusk
Surveyors	Niall Walkden George Sayer
Weather Conditions	14°C Dry 2/8 cloud F3
Sunset/Sunrise	20:36
Start time	20:10
Finish time	22:40

5.0 RESULTS

- 5.1 No bats were seen to emerge / re-enter from the building on site during the bat emergence / re-entry survey undertaken during 10th May 2018.
- 5.2 There were 'low' levels of bat activity during the survey with a single bat species recorded; a common pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*). Bats utilised a nearby tree approximately 50m north-west off-site for foraging. One bat was observed within the canopy of the tree and foraging levels within the canopy were fairly low.

Constraints

- 5.3 All surveys were undertaken during an appropriate time of the year and during optimal weather conditions. No major constraints which would cast doubt on the results of this survey were encountered.

6.0 EVALUATION

- 6.1 During the bat emergence survey conducted during the 10th May 2018, no bats were seen to be using **the building on site** for roosting. The bat emergence survey has been designed and conducted under the supervision of a licenced bat worker and to a suitably detailed specification. Absence of a bat roost is difficult to prove unequivocally however at the time of year when the surveys were undertaken, weather conditions during the survey and the lack of bat activity in / around the building all suggest the likely absence of a bat roost.
- 6.2 It is the opinion of the surveyors that the development proposals stand a 'negligible' risk of committing an offence as stipulated under *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)*. Due to the lack of confirmed bat emergence and the lack of anything suggestive of a bat emergence, a detailed bat mitigation strategy such as bat roost replacement / re-provision would not be proportionate to the predicted impact of this planning application. It is further recommended that no bat-related restriction be placed upon the timetable for the development.

- 6.3 The continued ecological functionality of a bat roost and the favourable conservation status of local bat populations are very unlikely to be detrimentally affected by this development. Potential habitat enhancements / roost provision which may improve the overall quality of the bat habitat are suggested in the following section. These may increase the likelihood of bats choosing to roost within the site confines.

7.0 HABITAT ENHANCEMENT / ROOST PROVISION

- 7.1 The following text provides guidance as to how to improve the development site for bats and is provided for information only. British bats are nocturnal and insectivorous; therefore, any habitat enhancement should consider the potential to increase the populations of night-flying insect within the area.

- 7.2 This would involve increasing the amount of native, fragrant, night-blooming plants. It is also best to vary the structure of the flowers present. Flowers with long, narrow petal tubes such as evening primrose would attract moths. Flowers with short florets such as those of the daisy and carrot families would attract many species of flies. Pale flowers are most easily seen in low light conditions and therefore attract insects at dusk. Good examples to include are:
- *Cornflower (Centaurea cyanus)*;
 - *Corn Poppy (Papaver rhoeas)*;
 - *Knapweeds (Centaurea spp.)*;
 - *Mallow (Malva sylvestris)*;
 - *Ox-eye Daisy (Leucanthemum vulgare)*;
 - *Evening Primrose (Oenothera biennis)*;
 - *White Campion (Silene latifolia)*.
- 7.3 Establishing compost heaps and log piles within the gardens of properties would also encourage insects to the area and have benefits for local bats. It is further suggested to avoid the use of chemical pesticides within the soft landscape scheme and management as this reduces bats' insect prey. Further information can be obtained from *Encouraging Bats: A Guide for Bat Friendly Gardening and Living (BCT 2011b)*.
- 7.4 Bat roosting opportunities could be provided through the installation of bat boxes to mature trees or to the new buildings. If hanging tiles and weather boarding are provided, small spaces could be created through the wall behind the coverings to give alternative routes into the cavity and building.
- 7.5 The use of Breathable Roofing Membrane (BRM) must be avoided where bats have access into a building as it can cause entanglement and death. Type 1F Bitumen roofing felt should be used where possible as it provides a suitable substrate for bats to move around on.

8.0 REFERENCES

- Altringham, J. (2006): *British Bats – New Naturalist Series*; Harper Collins, London;
- BCT (2016): *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines*; Bat Conservation Trust;
- BCT (2011): *Encouraging Bats – A Guide for Bat Friendly Gardening and Living*; Bat Conservation Trust;
- Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology (2017): LLD1194 - *Bat Activity Survey Reports at land at Old Mallig Farm*.
- Mitchell-Jones and McLeish (2004): *Bat Workers Manual*; 3rd Edition, JNCC.

Appendix No. 01 – Bat Emergence Survey Full Results*Land at Old Malling Farm, Lewes, East Sussex**Client: ECE Planning**Surveyor: GS*

Visit No.	Date	°C	Weather	Sunset	Start Time	Finish Time
01	10/05/18	14	8/2 cloud, F3, dry.	20:36	20:10	22:40

Point No.	Figure No.	Emerging Bats?	Species	Peak KHz	No. of Emergences / Re-Entries
01		No.	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.

21:28 C-Pip foraging in tree off-site;
 21:36 C-Pip commuting north west of site

Summary of Bat Activity

Where was bat activity?	In tree north-west of site
What was level of activity? (Low) 1-6 (High)	1 – low
Were there any landscape features used by bats?	Tree off-site.
What were they being used for – transit, foraging?	Occasional foraging.

Appendix No. 01 – Bat Emergence Survey Full Results*Surveyor: NW*

Visit No.	Date	°C	Weather	Sunset	Start Time	Finish Time
01	10/05/18	14	8/2 cloud, F3, dry.	20:36	20:10	22:40

Point No.	Figure No.	Emerging Bats?	Species	Peak KHz	No. of Emergences / Re-Entries
02		No.	N/A.	N/A.	None.
Low levels of bat activity heard but not seen, assumed along hedgerow /treeline; SPip and CPip.					
Summary of Bat Activity					
Where was bat activity?		None			
What was level of activity? (Low) 1-6 (High)		- Low			
Were there any landscape features used by bats?		No			
What were they being used for – transit, foraging?		n/a			