



Bat Survey and Report

Church Field, Station Road, East Preston, West Sussex

TQ 064026

for



Prepared by:

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August 2007

canopyCCFEP.0207.BAT01

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 The property lies on Station Road on the edge of a predominantly built up to the north of East Preston. Just under .75km to the north is the A259 and to the north of this the area becomes very rural with farmland and a golf course.
- 1.2 'Church Field' was built around 1920 and adjoins an open area of public open space to the east. To the south is a church which has a large graveyard surrounded by hedgerows and containing several mature trees. There are a number of large houses to the north which are of a similar size to the subject of this survey and also have large mature gardens.
- 1.3 The house has hanging tiles on all four aspects. During the last twenty years two extensions have been added, one to the east and the other the south west, both of which have flat roofs.
- 1.4 Built of brick, the property has clay roof tiles as well as the clay hanging tiles. There are two main roof voids in the main house that were accessible at the time of survey.
- 1.5 The large garden has recently had a number of large trees removed which previously excluded much light from the house. This, together with the wisteria and mature shrubs that still exist, will have made the building cool as well as dark. To the south of the house is a large, unmaintained pond with weed covering its surface.



Climbing plants and mature shrubs grown on or close to the house



The pond

2.0 Methodology

- 2.1 All buildings at the site were inspected for the suitability of bats. Consideration was also given to the surrounding area for foraging and flight lines. The outside of the buildings was inspected, searching for signs of bats, their droppings, urine stains and marks caused by their fur rubbing against materials at a roost entrance.
- 2.2 The interior of the buildings were inspected for bat droppings, butterfly and insect wings, urine stains and again marks caused by fur rubbing against points where bats could gain access.
- 2.3 An evening survey was carried out using frequency division bat detectors and Sony recording equipment. Bat Scan software was available as an aid to identification and production of sonograms, should these be required.

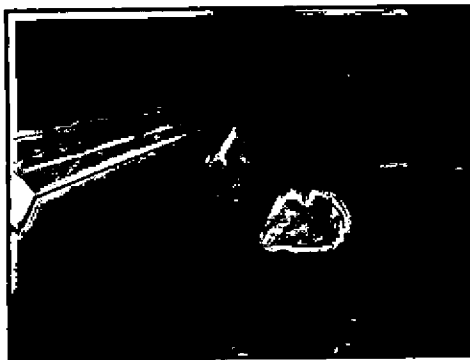
3.0 Visual Survey

- 3.1 A visual survey of the building was carried out using powerful binoculars and a lamp to illuminate areas under the hanging tiles, this method also allows identification of rub marks, droppings and other identifying signs left by bats. It also illuminates areas where there are undisturbed cobwebs.



Areas of tiling both on the walls and roof were inspected

- 3.2 Areas of the roof, such as the ridge tiles were also inspected in this manner.
- 3.3 Soffit areas were inspected for possible gaps that may be used by bats to enter the building.
- 3.4 The two main roof voids which are lined with fibreboard over wooden sarking, were inspected for droppings and other evidence of bats. There was also an area of hanging tiles within the roof void, which had been on the exterior of the house before one of the extensions was created.

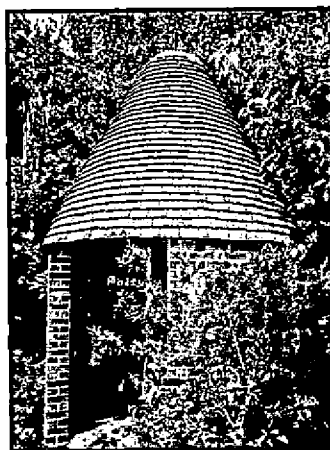


Roof void lined with fibreboard

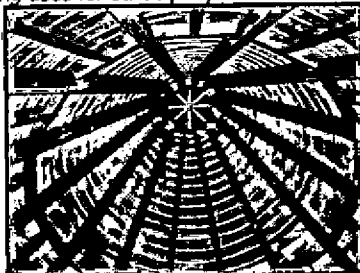


Area of interior void with hanging tiles still attached

- 3.5 An area used for barbeques designed in the shape of a small oast was also inspected, as was the garage. There was however, no access into the roof void of the garage.



The building used for barbeques, and the interior of its roof



- 3.6 All trees were inspected for possible roosting sites. Particular attention was given to crevices, cracks, splits or holes that could be used by bats.



Some of the trees on the site which have potential for bats

4.0 Activity Survey

- 4.1 An activity survey was carried out on the evening of the 21st August 2007. The weather was overcast but warm at 18^o Celsius at the commencement of the survey, however there was a slight drizzle during the survey. There was no moon and sunset was at 20:11hrs.
- 4.2 The two observers covered the house from the north east and the south west.

5.0 Results

- 5.1 No evidence of bats was found during the visual survey of the building or of the trees.
- 5.2 During the activity survey the observer to the south west identified four passes of pipistrelle bats (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), all of which were brief commuting flights and the bats did not stay at the site. The first of these was at 20:23 12 minutes after sunset.
- 5.3 The second observer identified only one pipistrelle of the same species at 20:32.
- 5.4 No bats were identified either emerging from, or close to, any of the buildings on this site.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 Although the house and garden offered many opportunities for bats, in particular pipistrelle bats, none were found to be roosting in this property. One reason could be the amount of shade previously created by the large trees that have recently been removed. Pipistrelle bats prefer to have very warm locations for their maternity roosts and although, following the removal of the trees, this building may now be

suitable, it would take time for the bats to investigate the site and take up this opportunity.

- 6.2 Although bats have not been found during this visit, it is possible that bats may take up residence in future summers now that the environment at the property has changed.
- 6.3 It is also possible that bats may use the hanging tiles as hibernation sites. Many species are often found in these locations during the cooler months of the year.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 Because this house now offers great potential for bats since the removal of the large trees that have been shading the house and it is likely that a roost could be established quite soon if the building remains, it is recommended that the premises should be demolished as soon as possible.
- 7.2 It is recommended that the hanging tiles and ridge tiles are removed very carefully by hand, rather than by machine. If bats are found during this process then work must immediately cease and advice be sought from a licensed bat worker or Natural England.
- 7.3 In certain circumstances it may be advisable to have the consultant on site during activities where bats may be discovered (such as the removal of tiles), thus minimising potential delays.
- 7.4 It is recommended that a further survey be carried out should the demolition not be carried out before the end of May 2008.
- 7.5 Incorporation of 'soffit box' style bat boxes within new buildings would be appropriate at this site. Examples of bat boxes and roosts are included at Appendix 1.
- 7.6 It is also recommended that the soft landscape treatment of any development be designed to attract wildlife to the site. Bats will be attracted especially by night scented plants and shrubs, which should be native British species. Enhancing the site for bats could therefore include such plants as honeysuckle, buddleia, mallow, lavender, sage and other herbs, evening primrose, bluebells and red valerian.

Appendix 1

Bat Roost Illustrations

Bats and the Law

All bats are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) (as amended) through inclusion in Schedule 5. In England and Wales, this Act has been amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW), which adds an extra offence, makes species offences arrestable, increases the time limits for some prosecutions and increases penalties.

(see additional comments regarding Scotland and Northern Ireland)

All bats are also included in Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, & c.) Regulations 1994, (or Northern Ireland, 1995) (the Habitats Regulations), which defines 'European protected species of animals'.

Taken together, the Act, Order and Regulations make it illegal to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (or take) bats;
- Deliberately disturb bats (whether in a roost or not);
- Recklessly disturb roosting bats or obstruct access to their roosts;
- Damage or destroy bat roosts;
- Possess or transport a bat or any part of a bat, unless acquired legally;
- Sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats, or parts of bats.

The word 'roost' is not used in the legislation but is used here for simplicity. Legal opinion is that the roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time. *(Bat Workers Manual 3rd Edition 2004).*