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Bat Scoping Survey: 40 Bath Road, Emsworth, Hampshire.

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Introduction

The Ecology Co-op was instructed to undertake a bat scoping survey at the No 40 Bath Road property in Emsworth. The property consists of a large detached house set in domestic gardens. It is proposed that parts of the east facing elevation of the building are to be altered through the construction of an extension. The survey work detailed within this report is therefore required to collect information relating to the possible presence of roosting bats within this section of the building.

All species of bats within the UK are protected via The Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations (2010) and also the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), as amended (Appendix 1). Therefore, it is an offence to kill or injure a bat, or to interfere with any bat 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 is 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 ensure no offence is committed under UK and EU wildlife legislation.

Survey Methods

The bat scoping survey was undertaken on the 17th of April 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) (Hundt, 2012)¹.

The roof void within the property 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, with the use of an endoscope to survey crevices where necessary. Externally the areas of the property proposed to be altered upon the east facing elevation were surveyed, making use of a high powered torch where necessary, for possible entry points, roosting crevices, evidence of staining, scratch marks and bat droppings. Crevices, where possible, were surveyed with the use of a ladder and endoscope.

Results

The property is set within domestic gardens, surrounded by similarly properties, with Slipper Pond to the east. The property is situated within 100m of the coastline within a suburban setting. The local gardens provide suitable foraging areas for a number of the commoner species of bat associated with suburban environments (Fig. 1). The roof of the property is clad in largely well

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



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fitting, modern concrete roof tiles and appears to be devoid of gaps suitable for supporting crevice roosting bats (Fig. 2), such as the pipistrelle species, commonly associated with roosting upon the extremities of buildings. The roof void is timber framed and lined with bitumen roofing felt, with an approximate floor space of 10x10m (Fig. 3). There is no evidence to suggest that bats have used the roof void as roosting space within the recent past. The PVC soffits throughout the building are tightly fitted (Fig. 4) and all other similar external aspects of the building within the eastern facing aspect proposed to be affected by the works are in good condition, with no gaps suitable for crevice roosting bats. The upper sections of the building are clad in modern, largely well fitting hanging tiles (Fig. 2, 4 & 5). The gaps between these hanging tiles upon the eastern elevation proposed to be affected by the works were checked for evidence of crevice roosting bats with an endoscope. There is no evidence to suggest that crevice roosting bats have been using the hanging tiles upon this section of the property.

A single bat dropping was found at the northern face of the property, underneath a gap in the hanging tiles on this face and this suggests that roosting bats may have been using this crevice for roosting.



Figure 1. Google Earth screen grab of the wider location of 40 Bath Road, with the property depicted with the red circle. Figure orientated north to south.



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Figure 2. East facing aspect of 40 Bath Road, with the area proposed for alteration above the car port and to the right of the porch.



Figure 3. The roof void within 40 Bath Road, timber framed with bitumen roofing felt.



Figure 4. The tight fitting PVC soffits devoid of potential bat roosting gaps upon the eastern elevation of 40 Bath Road.



Figure 5. The hanging tiles devoid of evidence to suggest the use by crevice roosting bats roosting upon the eastern elevation of 40 Bath Road.

Discussion and Recommendations

The results of the scoping survey suggest that the eastern facing elevation of the property (proposed to be affected as part of the proposed works to 40 Bath Road) has a negligible potential to support roosting bats and no signs of use by bats was identified during the assessment. No further surveys or mitigation works are recommended. However, there was evidence to suggest that areas of the hanging tiles upon the north facing aspect of the property may support small numbers of crevice roosting bats, as a single dropping was found below a gap between a hanging tile. Therefore if plans change and other parts of the structure of the building are to be altered it maybe necessary to undertake further surveying and mitigation works with regards to roosting bats. It is essential that this part of the building is not disturbed in any way during any of the proposed work.



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



Appendix 1 - Legislation and Policy

All species of British bats receive full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended through inclusion in Schedule V. Bats within the UK are also included in Schedule II of the Habitats Regulations 2010, which transposes 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. All bat species are also afforded further protection by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000; and by 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
- cause 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.

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 authorized by the license will not be detrimental to the maintenance of bat populations at a favorable 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."*

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 summer roosts, used for breeding; or winter roosts, used for hibernating.