

Potential Bat Roost Assessment

Land at Bluebells,
Meopham, Kent DA13 0QS

Report to:
Mr. Max Cantwell

13th November 2024



Responsibilities:

This document has been prepared for the titled project and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority by the author.

Biological Data:

It is our intention to supply biological data to Kent and Medway Biological Recording Centre, unless directly instructed in writing not to do so by the commissioning client.

Length of Time Report is Valid:

This report can be considered valid for 2 years from the date of the site visit.

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SUMMARY

A Potential Bat Roost Assessment of Bluebells, Willow Walk, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent, DA13 0QS was undertaken in support of a planning application for change of use from a single dwellinghouse into two dwellinghouses, with alterations to the roof.

No evidence of bats or significant roosting potential was recorded in the dwelling.

No further survey work for bats is required.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location

The focus of this report is Bluebells, Willow Walk, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent, DA13 0QS. The site contains a detached bungalow. A garage and trees are also present, but these are outside of the red line boundary and will not be impacted. Refer to Calumma (2024) for further details.

1.2 Proposed Works

The proposal includes change of use from a single dwellinghouse into two dwellinghouses, with alterations to the roof.

1.3 Aims of the Study

To inform the planning application, the following was undertaken:

- Potential Bat Roost Assessment.

The objectives of the assessment were to:

- Identify the presence or potential presence of bats within the site;
- Identify the requirement for targeted bat surveys;
- Identify the need for bat mitigation licensing; and
- Make recommendations for any mitigation and or enhancement measures that may be required.

1.4 Legislation

Information on legislation relating to bats is shown in Appendix 1.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Building Inspection

A building inspection was undertaken as part of the Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) (Calumma, 2024), which followed the survey guidelines recommended in The Bat Workers' Manual (Mitchell-Jones, 2004) and the Bat Conservation Trust's Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J. (ed.), 2023).

The PEA identified a small number of potential roost features (PRFs) with low suitability for bats. A more detailed endoscope inspection was recommended.

The building was inspected internally and externally on 15th October 2024. A more detailed inspection was undertaken on 5th November 2024, using ladders, endoscope and torch. This enabled the surveyors to undertake a full detailed inspection of all the PRFs identified in the PEA.

2.2 Personnel

The detailed inspection was conducted by licenced ecologist Kate Baldock (Class Survey Licence WML CL18 - Bat Survey Level 2) registration number 2015-12362-CLS-CLS, and Dr Lee Brady. Kate has 19 years of bat survey and mitigation experience.

3 RESULTS

The red line boundary contains a detached bungalow constructed from brick with a pitched concrete-tiled roof. Soffits and window frames are of uPVC. The bungalow was noted to be in a generally good condition.

Internally, there is a single open plan loft space. No bat evidence or significant potential for roosting bats was noted. Some recent work had been undertaken in the loft, but this had not affected the potential presence of any evidence of roosting bats.

Externally, the roof is in an apparently good condition with no missing tiles. Small gaps at the corner roof tiles and under the soffits at the gable ends were noted. These were subject to a detailed elevated endoscope and torch inspection. No bats or evidence of bats was noted.

4 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.1 Limitations

No significant limitations to the inspection were noted. A robust inspection of the building was undertaken with no access restrictions.

4.2 Potential Impacts

It is considered that a complete inspection of all PRFs has been undertaken (loft, corner tile gaps and soffit gaps), with no evidence of bats being found. It is therefore considered that on the balance of probability, it is unlikely that bats are present within the building and that it would not be pragmatic or proportionate to undertake further survey work.

The building is not considered to have significant potential to support roosting bats. Therefore, the proposals are not anticipated to impact the Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) of bats in the area as a) no roosts will be affected; and b) no fragmentation or isolation of habitat is likely to result.

5 CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Further Survey

If the proposed development does not proceed within 2 years of the date of the site visit, it is recommended that an updated Potential Bat Roost Assessment is undertaken, to confirm if the results of the current survey are still valid.

5.2 Recommendations

Emergency Measures

In the unlikely event that any bats and/or evidence of bats are found during work to the building, work must stop and an ecologist must be contacted for the most appropriate course of action, which may require a European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licence from Natural England.

Enhancement

A single bat box (Kent Bat Box or similar) should be placed on the retained tree at the north of the site. This should be at least 3.5m high and not illuminated by artificial lighting.

Lighting

It is recommended that any lighting is designed to minimise impacts on foraging/commuting bats.

If external lighting is required, this should be low or zero UV, which is preferred to reduce attraction of insects to lighting and therefore to reduce the attraction of foraging bats (and hence their predators) to these areas.

Lighting should be directed away or shielded from adjacent hedgerows and trees, to allow bats safe foraging routes where they will not be visible to predators.

6 RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS

Calumma (2024). *Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Land at Bluebells, Meopham, Kent DA13 0QS.*

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines.* 4th Edition. Bat Conservation Trust, London, UK.

English Nature (2002). *Bats in roofs: a guide for surveyors.* English Nature, Peterborough, UK.

Gunnel, K., Murphy, B. & Williams, C. (2013). *Designing for Biodiversity: A technical guide for new and existing buildings.* RIBA, UK.

APPENDIX 1 - Legislation

Bats

All species of British bat are listed on the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and are listed as European Protected Species on the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

In Britain all bat species and their roosts are legally protected, by both domestic and international legislation.

In summary, it is an offence to:-

- Deliberately take, injure or kill a wild bat
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats (disturbance which is 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).
- Damage or destroy a place used by bats for breeding or resting (roosts) (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
- Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat of a species found in the wild (dead or alive) or any part of a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.



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