

28 Westaway Park, Yatton

Bat Scoping Survey Report

On behalf of Siobhan Taylor

Prepared by: Sarah Dale

Avondale Ecology

3 Southview Cottages, Hewish, North Somerset, BS24 6RW

tel: 07713 001113

email: sarah@avondaleecology.com

AE312
Revision: 1
June 2021

Contents

1 Executive Summary 2

2 Introduction 3

3 Methodology..... 5

4 Results 7

5 Impact Assessment 9

6 Recommendations 10

References 12

Appendices 13

1 Executive Summary

Avondale Ecology completed a building inspection for bats and nesting birds of a detached bungalow and outbuilding at 28 Westaway Park, Yatton in June 2021. The survey was to inform proposals for a loft conversion and extension of the building, involving demolition of the outbuilding to provide suitable living accommodation.

The building is in a good condition, with the roof intact and in excellent condition. There was no obvious bat access into the loft and no evidence of bats was found internally. The roof was almost entirely intact; two features were seen which could provide potential bat access but both were suboptimal for use by bats. There was not reasonable likelihood of roosting bats being present and impacted and overall, the buildings were considered to have negligible potential to support roosting bats in summer or winter. There was negligible potential for nesting birds to be present in the building.

All other areas within the footprint of works are of low ecological value, mostly comprising paving. No habitats suitable for nesting birds will be impacted.

The following precautionary avoidance and mitigation measures will be required:

Avoidance/Mitigation Measures;

- Proposals to proceed with caution with works to cease and ecologist contacted for advice if bats or nesting birds are unexpectedly found; and
- Sensitive external lighting design to minimise light spill, especially to the west, in accordance with best practice.

Enhancement Measures

- Nesting bird provision and/or bat roost feature could be installed.

Please be aware that a survey of this nature can only provide a snapshot of the site's ecological importance. Please note that the survey results and any recommendations contained within this report will remain valid for two years following the date of survey.

2 Introduction

2.1 Introduction and Aims

Avondale Ecology was commissioned by Siobhan Taylor to complete a scoping survey for bats and nesting birds for a property at 28 Westaway Park, Yatton, BS49 4JU (Ordnance Survey Grid Reference ST43536543). A loft conversion and extension, requiring demolition of the outbuilding to the north-west of the property, is proposed to reconfigure the building to provide suitable living accommodation. The survey focused on bat and nesting bird potential of the buildings.

2.2 Objectives

The survey aimed to identify features suitable for use by protected species and identify any evidence which may indicate use by protected species, particularly bats and nesting birds. This included the following objectives:

- To identify any designated nature conservation sites on or in the vicinity of the property;
- To provide an indication of protected or notable species likely to be on or in the vicinity of the site;
- To record and map the suitable features for protected species, particularly bat species;
- To record any habitats of ecological importance;
- To identify whether there is any evidence of or potential for protected or notable to be present and impacted by the proposals;
- To detail requirements for a mitigation licence(s), if needed; and
- To make suggestions for avoidance, mitigation, compensation measures and working practices to meet legislative and best practice requirements.

2.3 Legislation

There are several different Acts of legislation and regulations which refer to the protection of wildlife of relevance to the site.

There are 18 species of bats in the UK, all of which are fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). They are also included in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The Wildlife and Countryside Act, the “Habitats Regulations” and the CRow Act 2000 together make it an offence, among other things, to recklessly, intentionally or deliberately:

- Disturb roosting bats or obstruct access to their roosts;
- Disturb a significant number of bats (whether in a roost or not);
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to bat roosts;
- Kill, injure or capture (or take) bats.

A bat roost is defined as “any structure or place (including trees) which any bat uses for shelter or

protection". Because bats tend to re-use the same roosts, legal opinion is that the roost is protected whether or not the bat(s) are present at the time.

Statutory protection is given to nesting birds in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. In addition, it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act while they are nest building or at/ near a nest with eggs or young, or to disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

This is a brief summary of the legislation and is not to be regarded as a definitive legal opinion. When dealing with individual cases, the client is advised to consult the full texts of the relevant legislation and obtain further legal advice.

3 Methodology

3.1 Desk Study

A Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre (BRERC) search was not completed in this case due to the scale of the proposals. Internationally and nationally designated sites up to a 1km from the site and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated for bat species up to 10km from the site were identified using the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website (www.magic.gov.uk). Local Wildlife Sites were not searched for as the building comprises a bungalow and residential garden in a urbanised area of Yatton. Aerial photographs and Ordnance Survey maps were also reviewed to assess the site in context of surrounding habitats. In addition, North Somerset Council's planning portal was searched for any evidence of protected species having been a consideration in other planning applications in the area. The MAGIC website was searched for records of European Protected Species (EPS) licence applications in the area submitted between 2013-2018, great crested newt eDNA survey results and licence returns from Natural England data.

3.2 Building Inspection

The internal and external building inspection of the bungalow and outbuilding was undertaken in accordance with *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines* 3rd Edition (Collins Ed., 2016), *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* (English Nature, 2004) and the *Bat Workers Manual* (Mitchell-Jones and McLeish, 2004). The survey was completed by Sarah Dale (MCIEEM and Natural England bat survey licence holder 2018-36720-CLS-CLS) on 2nd June 2021. Sarah is an experienced ecologist with 15 years' professional practice.

The interior of the buildings was fully accessed and thoroughly searched, including the loft of the bungalow. The exterior of the buildings was observed from ground level paying particular attention to potential access points for bats. Features were searched for evidence of use by bats where access was possible and where these could be inspected with a flexible endoscope and 4m ladder. Some features were not accessible but could be visually inspected, at least in part by a high-powered torch. Signs of bats include live animals, corpses, noises, droppings, urine staining, feeding remains (e.g. moth and butterfly wings) and scratches. Where present, these signs were recorded and mapped. Any evidence of nesting birds was also recorded. The buildings were categorised using the criteria in Table 1.

A full habitat survey was not completed, although habitats within the footprint of works were characterised and key species recorded. Any potential for other protected and notable species to be present and impacted was also recorded.

Table 1: Bat Roost Potential Categories*(Category descriptions drawn from Collins, 2016 and Mitchell-Jones, 2004)*

Roost Potential	Description
Confirmed	Confirmed signs of bat presence/ occupation (droppings, oily staining around entry points, insect remains, odour, scratching) or actual bat presence (live or dead bats).
High	Features present with high potential to support roosting bats. These include structures with points of access to the interior through degraded/missing mortar/brickwork, proximity to good foraging habitat such as woodland or water and suitable crevices or woodpecker holes and holes within trees.
Moderate	Features with some potential to support roosting bats. Access points may include mortar cracks in brickwork or holes in soffits/fascias.
Low	Few features of bat interest. A limited number of features which may support individual bats rather than sizeable roosts.
Negligible	Negligible potential for roosting and bats very unlikely to be present. Includes structures constructed from unsuitable materials e.g. prefabricated with steel with no entrance opportunities.

3.3 Constraints

The building and loft could be viewed in its entirety and could be visually assessed from ground level where features were not directly accessible. The survey was completed at an optimal time of year. There were no significant constraints to the survey and the survey is likely to be representative of typical conditions at the site.

4 Results

4.1 Desk Study

4.1.1. Designated Sites

Cadbury Hill Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is situated 340m south-east of the property and is of value for woodland and grassland habitats. Biddle Street Yatton Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is 950m west and is designated due to wetland habitats and associated flora and fauna. None of the habitats for which the SSSI is designated are present on site. Due to the scale and nature of the proposals, they would not meet Natural England's Impact Risk Zone criteria. There are several SSSI component units of the North Somerset and Mendip Bats Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated for internationally-important horseshoe bat populations within 10km. The closest is King's Wood and Urchin Wood SSSI 1.3km south-east. The buildings do not have potential to support roosting horseshoe bats as there is no suitable fly-in access. These species require open access features of at least 10-15cm in width e.g. defunct windows.

4.1.2 Protected and Notable Species Records

- Bat species: The Yatton area is known to support at least 13 species of bat including all three British species of *Pipistrelle* bats, most species of *Myotis* bats, all three larger bat species, both species of long-eared bats and horseshoe *Rhinolophus* bats. The site is in Band B of the *North Somerset and Mendip Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Guidance on Development*.
- Bird species: There are nearby known populations of bird species including Birds of Conservation Concern (RSPB, 2009). This includes red list species, which have been subject to recent declines, such as house sparrow *Passer domesticus* and starling *Sturnus vulgaris*.

4.1.3 Additional Information

There was one recent application with ecological information from the BS49 4JU postcode area. A bat scoping survey and dawn re-entry survey were completed for an application for 27 Westaway Close in 2019 for application 19/P/1214/FUH. No evidence of roosting bats was found and low levels of common pipistrelle activity were recorded. There are no previous protected species licence records within 1km and no ponds shown on Ordnance Survey mapping within 250m. There are no mapped priority habitats/Habitats of Principal Importance within or immediately adjacent to the site.

4.2 Site Description

The detached bungalow is situated on a residential street in the village of Yatton. The area of works comprises the building itself, a small area of hardstanding and an outbuilding (former garage/workshop). The garden comprises hardstanding (paving or gravel) and species-poor mown amenity grassland (dominated by perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*) in the vicinity of the garden with denser ornamental shrubs towards the western end of the plot. The property is approximately 100m south-west of open countryside.

4.3 Building Inspection

The detached bungalow dated from the 1970s is constructed of brick and intact render; prior to construction the plot comprised an orchard according to historic mapping. Externally, the building is in excellent condition. uPVC soffits are intact and grilled with no access for bats or nesting birds under the eaves. Brickwork and flashing around the chimney is intact. Interlocking concrete tiles are in good condition with no obvious slipped tiles and mortar under ridge tiles is almost entirely intact. On the northern elevation there was a 1cm wide gap under one tile on the northern elevation and a small chip (approximately 1cm) in the ridge mortar at two places on the south elevation. However, the gaps in mortar are unlikely to progress into a significant crevice. The width of the access gaps are sub-optimal for bats, even small crevice dwelling bats such as pipistrelle species.

Internally, the loft is approximately 6m x 6m and 3m high (maximum). The roof structure comprises modern softwood timbers with bitumen underlay above. The underlay was entirely intact and the roof was in excellent condition. The loft had remained undisturbed for some time but there were no bat or rodent droppings. There was an individual hornet nest near the hipped roof apex. The rooms in the ground floor living space had no bat access. There were no obvious suitable features on the building for roosting bats and no evidence of use by bats was found. There was negligible potential for hibernating bats to be present.

The outbuilding was approximately 4m long, 2m wide and 2.5m high and of single-skinned blockwork construction with an unlined corrugated asbestos roof on a metal frame. There were several glazed windows, resulting in light spill internally. There were no obvious crevices or undisturbed voids suitable for use by bat species. There was no evidence of roosting bats, although the outbuilding is used by mice. The outbuilding has negligible suitability for roosting bats and no evidence of nesting birds was seen.

5 Impact Assessment

5.1 Designated Sites and Habitats

There will be no impacts on designated sites due to the scale and location of the proposals.

5.2 Bat Species

Bat roosts, defined as a 'place of rest or shelter', are protected from destruction, modification or obstruction under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Bats are protected from deliberate or reckless killing or injury. Bats are also protected from disturbance whilst in a roost or significant disturbance to their ability to survive or reproduce. Roosts are protected even if bats are not present at the time of works.

The bungalow and outbuilding was considered to have negligible bat roost potential due to lack of access and no obvious optimal bat roost features which will be impacted. There is always a risk with buildings in locations such as Yatton where high bat biodiversity has been recorded that crevice-dwelling bats which are not present during one survey may colonise the building before works commence.

Some bat species are sensitive to high levels of light pollution and would be impacted by indiscriminate light spill, although the risk of reduced to the north, south and east due to existing light spill. Best practice will need to be followed to minimise additional light spill onto nearby habitats suitable for light sensitive species such as horseshoe bats. No other bat habitats will be impacted.

5.3 Other Species

It is an offence to kill a wild bird or damage or destroy their nests or eggs under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). There was no evidence of recent or historic activity by nesting birds and negligible/very low potential for nesting birds to be using the building.

No other protected or notable species will be impacted.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Mitigation and Avoidance Measures

6.1.1 Bat Species

No further bat emergence/re-entry surveys are required as the building is of negligible bat roost potential. Also, there will not be 'reasonable likelihood' (as in paragraph 99 of ODPM Circular 06/2005) of impacting on bat roosts as there are no obvious or potential bat roost features within the area of works. If bats or their roosts (e.g. accumulations of droppings) are unexpectedly found during works, all activities must cease and an ecologist contacted for advice. A Natural England licence may then be required for works to proceed lawfully.

Best practice should be followed including designing lighting sensitively in accordance with *Guidance Note 8: Bats and Artificial Lighting* (ILP, 2018). External lighting should only be used where necessary. Features such as PIR sensors or short-duration timers and wall mounted, bollard and/or downward-facing lights should be used for external lights, particularly to the west of the building.

6.1.2 Nesting Birds

It is unlikely that nesting birds will be present, but contractors should be instructed to remain vigilant. If any active birds' nests are found or suspected to be present, works must cease immediately and an ecologist contacted for advice. If active nests are unexpectedly found during works, they will need to be left along with a suitable buffer area until the chicks have fledged. The time until fledging varies dependent on species but can take up to six weeks. The main bird nesting season is March to September.

6.2 Enhancement Measures

An additional feature for nesting birds such as a house sparrow terrace (e.g. Schwegler 1SP) or swift brick (e.g. the S brick [Action for Swifts: The S Brick](#)) could be integrated into or attached to the new building. If appropriate for these to be included, these should be sited at least 3m above ground level and in a location where they are unlikely to be disturbed or accessible to predators.

A bat box could be incorporated into the new roof structure. Options for bat roost creation include:

- Roost feature in new soffit/fascias created by leaving 2-3cm access gaps or holes or installing a soffit bat box (see www.wildcareshop.com/soffit-bat-box.html). Ideally, the soffit would be wood or rough-surfaced (i.e. not uPVC) for this option to be most effective;
- Bat tubes such as Schwegler 1FR;
- Bat bricks such as Ibstock brick or Habibat box; or

- Attached bat boxes such as Schwegler 2FE or Beaumaris woodstone boxes, although these often degrade more rapidly or become detached over time.

References

Collins, J. Ed. (2016). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines*. 3rd Edition. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2012). *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*. IEEM, Winchester. Available at www.ieem.net/docs/GPEA_web.pdf .

Institute of Lighting Professionals (2018). *Guidance Note 8 – Bats and Artificial Lighting*. ILP, Rugby. <https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>

JNCC (2010). Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey - a technique for environmental audit.

RSPB (2015). The Population Status of Birds in the UK - Birds of Conservation Concern 4.

Williams, C. (2010). *Biodiversity for Low and Zero Carbon Buildings: A Technical Guide for New Build*. RIBA, London.

Appendices

Appendix A Site Photographs



A.1 East and south elevations



A.2 East elevation



A.3 West elevation



A.4 Roof structure in loft



A.5 Outbuilding (south elevation)



A.6 Interior of outbuilding