

TREES AT PARK LANE, GLAPWELL -
BAT-BOX AND NESTING BIRD
ASSESSMENT

JULY 2021

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INTRODUCTION

Arc Ecology were commissioned to carry out checks on two bat-boxes attached to two mature beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) trees on an area of land at the eastern end of Park Avenue, Glapwell, Derbyshire to attempt to determine whether they had been used by bats prior to the proposed removal of the trees to provide access for a planned new development site.

While the emphasis of the current investigation was to determine presence/absence of bats, the trees were also assessed for the presence of nesting birds.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The land is situated at the eastern end of Park Avenue at OSGR SK 48190 66145 and consists of a narrow band of grassland running north to south containing a number of mature beech trees (see Plate 1 and Photograph 1).

Plate 1 - Aerial view of site with area of land in red



Photograph 1 - View of trees from east



METHODOLOGY

The appraisal of the bat-boxes was undertaken on the 21st July 2021 by a suitably qualified ecologist and current holder of a current Level II Class Licence to survey for bats (license number 2017-27501-CLS-CLS).

The appraisal consisted of checking the boxes for the presence of bats or evidence of use by bats including droppings and staining from urea or the oil from the fur of bats following guidelines published by the Bat Conservation Trust (2016) and Mitchell-Jones (2004).

The appraisal was undertaken from ground level and was augmented by the use of binoculars, ladders, a torch and an endoscope as required.

Appraisal of habitats suitable for nesting birds followed guidance given by Bibby et al. (2000).

CONSTRAINTS

There were no constraints to the survey and all areas of the site were accessible.

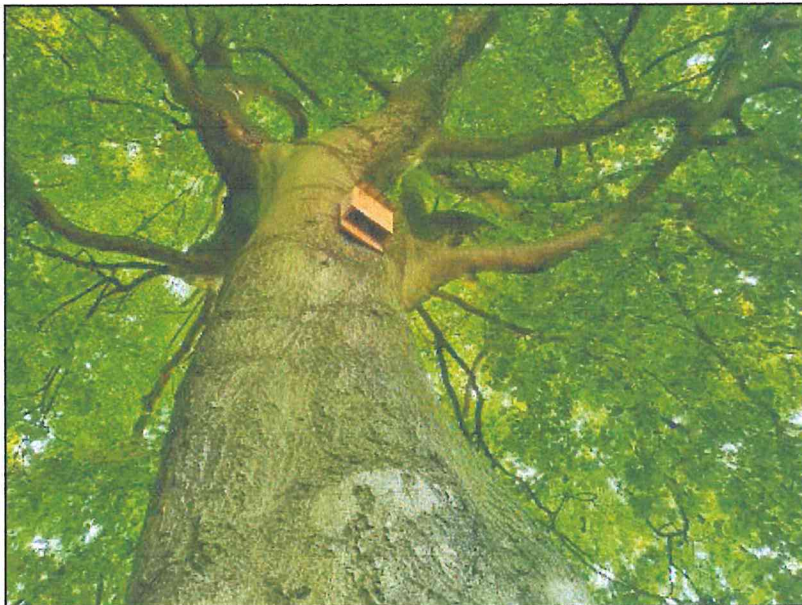
SURVEY RESULTS

BATS

No evidence of the current or historic presence of bats was found on or within either of the boxes during the survey.

The boxes appear to be part of a more extensive scheme undertaken in this area by local residents and the boxes appear to be home-made and are of various designs with a total of thirteen boxes counted spread throughout the trees in the area. Judging by the condition of the wood, the boxes have been erected very recently and show very little signs of weathering. Some follow traditional designs with a bat ladder at the base and a small entrance slit for bats, but the boxes in question are of a different design which the surveyor had not encountered before and have no bat ladder with the bottom of the box entirely open. Additionally, the roofs of the boxes have been made from multiple pieces of wood and daylight is visible through the joins (see Photographs 2 - 5).

Photograph 2 - Bat box *in situ* in northernmost tree



Photograph 3 - Bat box *in situ* in southernmost tree



Photograph 3 - Internal view of bat-box in northernmost tree



Photograph 5 - Internal view of bat-box in southernmost tree



NESTING BIRDS

No evidence of nesting birds was found during the survey, but there were suitable features within the trees for such species and it is possible that they could be utilised by nesting birds during the current breeding season.

CONSTRAINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BATS

Bats and their habitats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CRow Act 2000), and by the Habitats Regulations 1994 (as amended 2007). In summary, these make it an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct any place used by bats for breeding and shelter, disturb a bat, or kill, injure or take any bat.

In addition, seven bat species are on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and are listed as Species of Principal Importance under the provisions of the NERC Act 2006. The National Planning Policy Network document 'ODPM Circular 06/2005' gives guidance on the treatment of Species of Principal Importance and states that local authorities should ensure that they are protected from the adverse effects of development, where appropriate, by using planning conditions or obligations.

The boxes checked are not considered to be particularly suitable for roosting or resting bats. The large opening at the bottom makes them bright inside and could potentially allow access to predators. The unsealed gaps between the pieces of wood used to make the roofs are also likely to allow water ingress, at least into some areas of the boxes.

The overall assessment is that these boxes have minimal suitability for roosting or resting bats.

However, bats are highly mobile species and can commence using such features at any time.

As such it is recommended that the boxes are re-checked immediately prior to work on the trees being undertaken.

If there is still no evidence of use at this time it would be considered safe to remove them from the trees to be felled and re-erected on other nearby trees to be retained.

In the unlikely event that bats are found to be present, advice must be sought from Natural England on how best to proceed and whether a European Protected Species (EPS) licence would be required to be in place before the boxes could be moved.

Additionally, the bat boxes in the other trees are to be retained so it is considered prudent to make their locations known to the tree surgeons undertaking the works so that felling, particularly the removal of large horizontal branches can be planned to minimise the potential for damage to these other boxes.

NESTING BIRDS

All nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which makes it an offence to 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 to this, for some rarer species (listed on Schedule 1 of the Act), it is an offence to disturb them while they are nest building or at or near a nest with eggs or young, or to disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

A number of bird species are also listed as Species of Principal Importance under the provisions of the NERC Act 2006. The National Planning Policy Network document 'ODPM Circular 06/2005' gives guidance on the treatment of Species of Principal Importance and states that local authorities should ensure that they are protected from the adverse effects of development, where appropriate, by using planning conditions or obligations.

There was no evidence of nesting birds found on or within the trees at the time of the survey, but they provided suitable features for such species and could be used at any time during the current breeding season.

It is recommended that the trees are also re-inspected for the presence of nesting birds immediately prior to works commencing.

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If nesting birds are found to be present at this time, all work likely to cause disturbance must cease until the young have fledged and the nest is no longer in use.

SUMMARY

- Inspection of two bat boxes on trees proposed to be felled within an area of land off Park Lane, Glapwell, Derbyshire was carried out by Arc Ecology on the 21st July 2021.
- No evidence of the current or historic presence of bats was found within either of the boxes. The boxes are home-made and were assessed to have minimal suitability for use by roosting or resting bats.
- It is considered that the potential for bats to be present in the boxes during works is negligible.
- However, bats are highly mobile species and can commence using features at any time.
- It is therefore recommended that the boxes are re-checked prior to works commencing and if no bats are present, it is considered safe to remove the boxes and re-erect them on nearby trees to be retained.
- In the unlikely event that bats are present, then advice should be sought from Natural England as to how to proceed and whether an EPS would be required to be in place before the boxes could be moved.
- There was no evidence of current bird nesting found in the trees during the survey, but there offer suitable features for such species and it is possible that birds could begin to use the trees for nesting at any time in the current breeding season.
- As such, the trees should also be re-checked for nesting birds prior to works commencing.
- If nesting birds are found to be present at this time, all works likely to cause disturbance should cease until the young have fledged and the nest is no longer in use.

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