

**Bat Survey Report for
55 Fieldgate Lane,
Kenilworth,
CV8 1BT**



Cotswold Wildlife Surveys

17th December 2020

QUALITY CONTROL

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The information in this report has been prepared in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) Code of Professional Conduct. The conclusions and recommendations expressed are reasoned judgements based on the evidence.

Every reasonable attempt has been made to comply with BS42020:2013 *Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development*, *CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing* (CIEEM, 2017) and Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (3rd edition, Collins, 2016). If there has been deviation from recognised practice, justification/explanation has been given.

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SUMMARY

At 55 Fieldgate Lane in Kenilworth, planning permission is being sought to demolish the bungalow and replace it with a new dwelling.

As this could impact on features typically used by bats as roosting places, a diurnal inspection was undertaken on 17th December 2020, to assess the house and garage for signs of bat occupation.

All the external and internal structures, especially those associated with the roof and walls of the buildings were examined.

No signs of bat activity or occupation were found, and the suitability for roosting pipistrelles *Pipistrellus sp* or other bat species was considered to be negligible, as there were no suitable crevices or gaps.

At the time of the survey, 55 Fieldgate Lane was not identified as a bat roost or hibernation site, and as such no further surveys or mitigation measures are required.

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No birds' nests were found either in or on the bungalow or garage at 55 Fieldgate Lane.

1. INTRODUCTION

In mid-December 2020, Cotswold Wildlife Surveys was instructed by Castle Homes of Warwick, to undertake a bat survey of 55 Fieldgate Lane in Kenilworth. On 17th December 2020, a visit was made to the property to carry out a diurnal inspection of the house and garage to check for signs of bat occupation.

The result of the survey is contained in this report.

In England, Scotland and Wales, all bat species 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.

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.'

The above legislation can be summarised thus (Mitchell-Jones and McLeish, 2004):

- *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 roosts*
- *Possess or transport a bat or any part of a 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. The actual wording is 'any structure or place which any wild animal...uses for shelter or protection' (WCA), or 'breeding site or resting place' (Habitats Regulations).

As bats generally have both a winter and a summer roost, the legislation is clear that all roosts are protected whether bats are in residence at the time or not.

2. METHODOLOGY

In order to fully assess bat occupation of a particular site, the Bat Conservation Trust (2016) recommends that information gathered from a desk study of known bat records, and a daytime site walkover, is used to inform the type and extent of future bat survey work, potentially including nocturnal surveys.

The diurnal walkover provides an opportunity to check for signs of occupancy, such as droppings, scratch marks, feeding remains, carcasses, or even animals in residence, whilst nocturnal surveys (if required) allow numbers and species of bats to be confirmed. The latter are also used to determine the presence or absence of bats, where signs of bat activity are indeterminate or absent, but suitability of roosting is considered to be medium to high.

Roosting places vary depending on the species. Pipistrelles usually inhabit narrow cracks or cavities around the outside of buildings, but they will roost in similar niches inside larger barns. Typical sites include soffit spaces, gaps behind fascia boards and end rafters, crevices around the ends of projecting purlins, under warped or lifted roof and ridge tiles, or in gaps in stone and brickwork where mortar has dropped out.

Larger species such as Brown Long-eared Bats *Plecotus auritus*, Myotis bats (Natterer's *Myotis nattereri* and Whiskered/Brandt's *M. mystacinus*/*M. brandtii*), and Lesser Horseshoe Bats *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, like to roost in the roof voids of buildings, and can often be found hanging singly or in small groups from ridge boards or roof timbers, especially where they butt up against gable walls or chimney breasts. They especially favour older structures with timber frames. Here they squeeze into tight crevices making them difficult to observe.

Diurnal walkovers can be carried out at any time of the year, but nocturnal surveys should only be undertaken when bats are out of hibernation and in their summer roosts. The recommended period is from May to September inclusive, with May to August optimum and September sub-optimum. The season can be extended into October, although particularly cold weather will render this inadvisable. Indeed, the air temperature at the start of each survey must be at least 10°C or above.

Visits will be a minimum of two weeks apart, and the number of surveys is dependent on the evidence found or the suitability of the site to bats.

Where bats are found, or there is evidence of bat occupation or activity, i.e. that bat use is confirmed, the number and timing of visits will be decided by the ecologist and will be appropriate for the type of roost. In general, at least two nocturnal surveys will be carried out, both of which can be emergence surveys, or one emergence and one dawn re-entry.

Where there is no evidence of bat presence, and no suitability for roosting, no nocturnal surveys will be needed.

For a site with no evidence but low suitability, just one nocturnal emergence survey is required, this to be in the optimum period.

For medium suitability a minimum of two visits are needed, of which one must be in the optimum period, and one must be a dawn re-entry survey. With high suitability, three visits will be necessary, of which two must be in the optimum period. At least one of these must be a dawn re-entry survey, with the third visit either an emergence or a dawn re-entry.

For sites < 5 ha in size, and/or regularly shaped structures, at least two surveyors must be present, with more surveyors at larger sites and more complex buildings, e.g. those with multiple elevations and/or roof structures.

On 17th December 2020 a thorough inspection of 55 Fieldgate Lane was made by Neil Musgrave (Natural England bat licence No. 2020-44602-CLS-CLS), including the exterior and interior walls, roof coverings, roof void, eaves, gables, window casements and door frames.

8x42 binoculars and a Fenix TK75 torch were used for the inaccessible/unreachable areas. On this occasion an endoscope was not used, as there were no crevices and cavities that could not be inspected with a torch or by use of binoculars from a ladder.

The result of the survey is detailed in Section 3.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

Within 5.0 km of 55 Fieldgate Lane, the following European Protected Species licences for bats were issued by Natural England:

- 2011 4.25 km southwest Brown Long-eared Bat;
- 2011 4.00 km southeast Brown Long-eared Bat and Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*;
- 2012 1.25 km southwest Common Pipistrelle;
- 2013 3.25 km northwest Brown Long-eared Bat, Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*;
- 2014 2.75 km north Brown Long-eared Bat and Common Pipistrelle;
- 2015 2.25 km northeast Brown Long-eared Bat, Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle;
- 2015 1.5 km south-southeast Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle.

A search of publicly available data on the Warwickshire County Council planning website, along with records from Warwickshire Biological Records Centre also revealed the following observations within 1.0 km:

- Common Pipistrelle – two bats emerging from hanging tiles of a house along Amherst Road 160 m west-northwest on 1st June 2016;
- Common Pipistrelle – single individual emerged from front of house along Malthouse Lane 320 m southwest in May 2012, with an unidentified *Myotis* species also detected foraging in the garden;
- Unidentified pipistrelle – 6 bats emerged from another house along Malthouse Lane 370 m southwest on 22nd July 2001;
- Unidentified bat – single bat in July 2000 along Malthouse Lane 440 m south-southwest;
- Common and Soprano Pipistrelles, Noctule, Daubenton's Bat *Myotis daubentonii*, unidentified *Myotis* and pipistrelles – all at Abbey Fields 650 m south between August 1984 and September 2014;
- Common Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared, Noctule, Leisler's *Nyctalus leisleri*, and an unidentified *Myotis* species along the High Street 500 m south between May and July 2016.

3.2 Location

Fieldgate Lane is located to the north of Kenilworth town centre. Number 55 lies 25 m to the northwest of the junction of Fieldgate Lane and Upper Spring Lane. The Ordnance Survey Grid Reference of the site is SP 28439 72991 (Appendix 1).

3.3 Site Description

The survey site comprised a detached multi-hipped roofed bungalow with a flat roofed extension to its rear and a flat roofed garage to the south (Figs. 1 and 2 overleaf).



Figs. 1 & 2 Front and rear views of the bungalow

The front of the house was mainly laid to a gravelled drive with two large mature trees (Turkey Oak *Quercus cerris* and Yew *Taxus baccata*) in the garden, and open fields and mature trees beyond (Figs. 3 and 4).



Figs. 3 & 4 Views of the front garden to the east (L) and north (R)

The large rear garden was overgrown with mature trees and shrubs along its boundaries (Figs. 5 and 6).



Figs. 5 & 6 Rear garden with mature trees and shrubs on its boundaries

The layout of the site is shown in the aerial photograph in Appendix 2.

3.4 Building Survey

3.4.1 Bats

The daytime inspection was carried out on 17th December 2020 commencing at 09:30. The weather conditions during the time of the survey were recorded and are presented in Table 1 below.

Parameter	Value
Temperature (°C)	5.5
Cloud cover (%)	30
Precipitation	None
Wind speed (Beaufort scale)	0

Table 1 Weather conditions during the diurnal survey

The ridges and hip ridges were all intact and sealed, with no gaps or crevices, whilst all the roof tiles were tightly overlapping with none broken, dislodged or missing (Figs. 7-16).



Figs. 7 & 8 Ridges and roof tiles to the front



Figs. 9 & 10 Ridges and roof tiles of the hipped roofs to the front

The front roof also included a roof light, with a small dormer window at the rear. These were sealed into the roof slopes with no gaps suitable for bat roosting.



Figs. 11 & 12 Ridges and roof tiles to the south



Figs. 13& 14 Ridges and roof tiles to the rear



Figs. 15 & 16 Ridges and roof tiles to the north

The ridge and roof tiles of the garage were tightly overlapping and sealed, whilst the flat roof was finished with tarred felt and was covered with moss (Figs. 17 and 18).



Figs. 17 & 18 Ridge and roof tiles of the garage (L) and the moss covered flat roof (R)

The chimney was finished with tightly moulded lead flashing around its base (Fig. 19).



Fig. 19 Tightly moulded lead flashing around the base of the chimney

The eaves of the bungalow were finished with tightly fitting against boxed soffits (Figs. 20 and 21).



Figs. 20 & 21 Tightly fitting boxed soffits

The eaves of the garage were finished with the roof ends tightly fitting against timber fascia boards which were tightly fitting against the garage walls (Fig. 22).



Fig. 22 Sealed eaves of the garage

The brick and rendered walls were sound throughout, whilst all the window casements and door frames were tightly fitting with no gaps or crevices.

No signs of bat activity were found around the outside of the bungalow or garage.

Internally the bungalow had a single roof void, this measuring approximately 2.5 m high and running the width and length of the building including the extended hips.

The roof was lined with tarred felt, this in good condition with no holes or tears observed. The ridge and plumb cuts were cobwebbed, this quite thick in several places (Figs. 23-28).



Fig. 23 Cobwebbed ridge of the main roof



Figs. 24 & 25 Cobwebbed plumb cuts of the main roof



Figs. 26 & 27 Cobwebbed ridge and plumb cuts of the extended hips

Light penetrated the void through the dormer window in the rear roof slope.



Fig. 28 Cobwebbed ridge and plumb cut of the extended hip to the north

The garage was open to the board lined underside of the flat roof (Figs. 29 and 29).



Figs. 28 & 29 Board lined underside of the flat roof

No evidence of bat occupation was discovered inside the bungalow or garage, and the interiors of both were considered inaccessible to bats.

3.4.2 Other species

No birds' nests were found either inside or outside the bungalow or garage.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Bats tend to be seasonal visitors to properties and are not usually in occupation all year round. The females normally form maternity colonies during May or June and then leave for adjacent trees and/or woodland during July or August once the young bats are able to fly and become independent. Here they will spend the winter months in hibernation before returning to the house or barn the following spring.

Male bats generally live alone and have a number of favoured roosts. During the summer they visit each of these for a few days at a time, before moving to their chosen hibernation site in mid-late October. Different species have different habits, but this seasonal movement is common to all.

Bats choose their roosts carefully. During the summer they look for sites which are warmed by the sun, and as a result are most often found on the south and western side of buildings.

Pipistrelles, our smallest and commonest bats, prefer to roost in very confined spaces around the outside of buildings, typical places being behind hanging tiles, weather boarding, soffit, barge and eave boarding, between roof felt and roof tiles or in cavity walls.

As such they can be difficult to find, so the suitability for roosting was also assessed.

This was considered to be negligible, as there were no suitable external crevices or cavities.

Another bat frequently encountered in buildings is the Brown Long-eared Bat. This is also a common species, but unlike pipistrelles, they prefer the dry, warm space of the loft or roof void, and can often be found hanging from roof timbers, especially rafters and the ridge board next to chimney breasts.

No signs of Brown Long-eared Bat activity were found, nor evidence of other bat species which commonly use buildings, and the interiors of both the house and garage were considered inaccessible to bats.

At the time of the survey, 55 Fieldgate Lane was not identified as a bat roost or hibernation site, and as such no further surveys or mitigation measures are required.

*

No birds' nests were found either inside or outside 55 Fieldgate Lane.

5. REFERENCES

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines.* (3rd edn). Bat Conservation Trust, London.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Location plan

Appendix 2: Site layout

Appendix 1: Location plan



55 Fieldgate Lane, Kenilworth

Appendix 2: Site layout



55 Fieldgate Lane

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