

# **Bat Survey of Grange Green Barn Grange Green Tilty**

**On behalf of:**

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## 1) Summary

As part of a planning proposal to extend a residential property at Grange Green Barn, Grange Green, Tilty, Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 2EQ, a site visit was conducted on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023 to determine whether the building had been used by bats.



**Photo 1:** Western elevation. The proposal is for two extensions on this side of the property

Built around eighteen years ago, the survey building is a detached bungalow with a tile and felted roof and part brick/part weather-boarded walls. The building is aligned approximately N-S and has a vaulted ceiling at the southern end and a small roof void to the north. The loft was accessed via a ladder and found to have no evidence of bats on the partly boarded floor, along the internal eaves of the building or on the many items stored within the loft. Externally, there was a tight seal to the roof stiles and also to the wooden cladding. No evidence of bats was found to be associated with this building.

There is no vegetation affected by the project that has crevices, loose bark or woodpecker holes that might be colonised by bats. **No** evidence of their presence was found at this site.

The lack of potential roosting places and absence of any evidence of the presence of bats means that **no** further surveys are required for this building. The building was considered to have **negligible potential** as a roosting place for bats.

Since no evidence of bats was found, a European Protected Species Licence will **not** be required for this project.

Although no evidence of bats was found in the building, it is probable that bats from nearby roosts (both Common Pipistrelles and Brown Long-eared Bats have been recorded from the church around 400m to the east) will forage across the site and in adjoining gardens. This behaviour would be expected to continue after the completion of the building work and therefore it is considered that the proposal for this site will not have a detrimental effect on the local bat population.

Please note that this survey records the status of the building at the time of the survey. However, if several months were to elapse before the commencement of the building work, it is considered unlikely, due to the lack of potential roosting places, that bats would colonise the site during the intervening period.

## **2) Introduction**

Essex Mammal Surveys were requested to carry out a survey of Grange Green Barn, Tilty to investigate for signs indicating the presence of bat colonies and their roosts. The identification of protected species is vital in the proposed development of a site to comply with existing legislation and also allows any work that may otherwise be detrimental to bats to be appropriately scheduled. John Dobson, a bat worker and trainer licensed by Natural England (Licence No. 2015-15258-CLS-CLS), and author of *Mammals of Essex* (2014), carried out the survey on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023. John Dobson has been elected a Fellow of the British Naturalists' Association and received the David Bellamy Award for natural history in 2015. The site is located at Grid Reference: TL595264.

This report has been compiled in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Survey Guidelines for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines*.

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

However, the first page of all four editions includes the following: *The guidelines should be interpreted and adapted on a case-by-case basis according to site-specific factors and the professional judgement of an experienced ecologist. Where examples are used in the guidelines, they are descriptive rather than prescriptive.*

## **3) Legislation and planning policy relating to bats in the UK**

All bat species in Britain are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 through inclusion on Schedule 5. They are also protected under the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (which were issued under the European Communities Act 1972), through inclusion on Schedule 2. From January 31<sup>st</sup> 2020 these Regulations were consolidated into the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU exit) Regulations 2019.

European protected animal species and their breeding sites or resting places are protected under Regulation 39. It is an offence for anyone to deliberately capture, injure or kill any such animal or to deliberately take or destroy their eggs. It is an offence to damage or destroy a breeding or resting place of such an animal. It is also an offence to have in one's possession or control, any live or dead European protected species.

The threshold above which a person will commit the offence of deliberately disturbing a wild animal of a European protected species has been raised. Now, a person will commit an offence only if he deliberately disturbs such animals in a way as to be likely significantly to affect (a) the ability of any significant groups of animals of that species to survive, breed, or rear or nurture their young, or (b) the local distribution of abundance of that species. However, please note that the existing offences under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended which cover obstruction of places used for shelter or protection (for example, a bat roost), disturbance and sale still apply to European protected species.

This legislation provides defences so that necessary operations may be carried out in places used by bats, provided the appropriate Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (in England this is Natural England) is notified and allowed a reasonable time to advise on whether the proposed operation should be carried out and, if so, the approach to be used. The UK is a signatory to the Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe, set up under the Bonn Convention. The Fundamental Obligations of Article III of this Agreement require the protection of all bats and their habitats, including the identification and protection from damage or disturbance of important feeding areas for bats.

Paragraph 98 of Circular 06/2005 states that *'the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat'*.

Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018 (NPPF) states that *'the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by ....minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity....'*

Since August 2007, building development that affects bats or their roosts needs a Protected Species Licence under The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 administered in England by Natural England.

Schedule 12, paragraph 13 of the CROW Act (2000) makes an offence under Section 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) an arrestable offence. As a result, the police gain additional power to aid the investigation and enforcement of the legislation protecting bats.

#### **4) Methods**

The exterior surfaces of the building were examined for any signs of use as bat roosts, such as the presence of droppings on walls, windows or staining around roost entrances. The use of a crevice by a colony of bats produces droppings on brickwork and adjacent surfaces close to the crevice, together with an accumulation of droppings beneath the roost entrance. However, upon examination, many surfaces will have one or two droppings, randomly placed, caused by bats seeking out new roost sites.

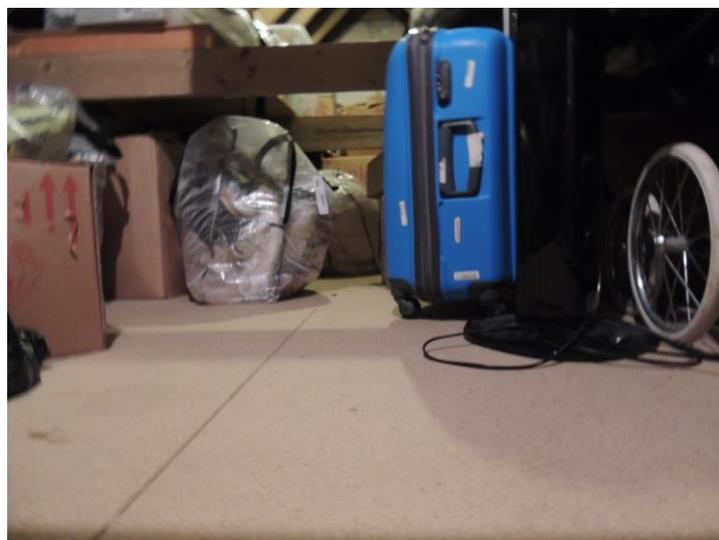
The internal survey was conducted using a powerful torch. The roof of the building was searched for evidence of roosting, the floor areas for droppings and the beams for crevices and staining indicative of the presence of roosting bats. An Xtend & Climb Pro Ladder and a ProVision 300 endoscope were available to inspect crevices in brickwork and around beams.

## 5) Results

Built around eighteen years ago, the survey building is a detached bungalow with a tile and felted roof and part brick/part weather-boarded walls. The building is aligned approximately N-S and has a vaulted ceiling at the southern end and a small roof void to the north. The loft was accessed via a ladder and found to have no evidence of bats on the partly boarded floor, along the internal eaves of the building or on the many items stored within the loft. Externally, there was a tight seal to the roof stiles and also to the wooden cladding. No evidence of bats was found to be associated with this building.



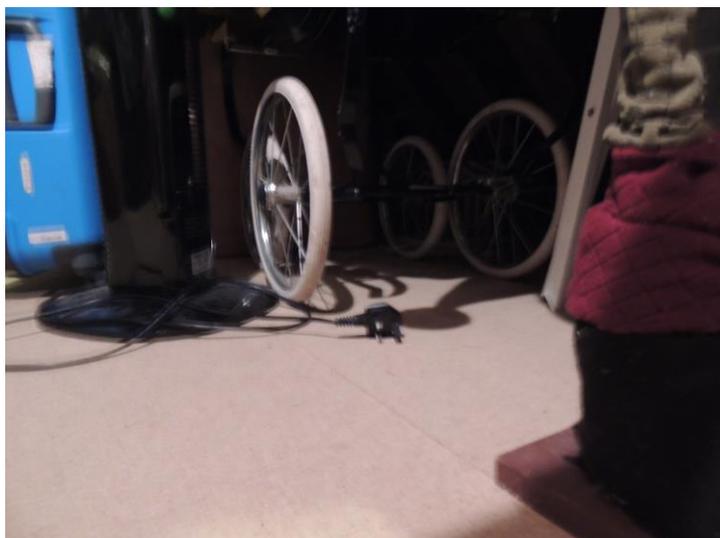
**Photo 2:** Southern elevation



**Photo 3:** Note lack of evidence of bats on boarded floor of loft



**Photo 4:** Note lack of evidence of bats on boarded floor



**Photo 5:** Note lack of evidence of bats on boarded floor



**Photo 6:** The roof had no features that might be occupied by bats



**Photo 7:** Note tight seal to gable



**Photo 8:** Note tight seal to cladding



**Photo 9:** The loft is at this end of the building. Note tight seal to roof tiles



**Photo 10:** Note tight seal to roof tiles

There is no vegetation affected by the project that has crevices, loose bark or woodpecker holes that might be colonised by bats.

No evidence of their presence was found at this site.

## 6) Discussion

Bats are inquisitive, highly mobile animals, which constantly investigate their surroundings, evaluating good feeding areas and potential roosting opportunities. Where suitable habitat such as woodland, woodland edge or sheltered pasture occurs, bats will travel up to several kilometres to take advantage of this resource. To reach favoured sites, small bats will follow linear landscape features such as hedgerows, streams and lanes etc. The absence of such features can make an otherwise suitable site inaccessible to bats. In addition, new roosts will become established in such areas - examples being the rapid colonisation of artificial roost boxes placed in conifer forests or the occupation of new houses by nursery colonies of pipistrelle bats within a year or two of their completion.

Since no evidence of bats was found, a European Protected Species Licence will **not** be required for this project.

Although no evidence of bats was found in the building, it is probable that bats from nearby roosts (both Common Pipistrelles and Brown Long-eared Bats have been recorded from the church around 400m to the east) will forage across the site and in adjoining gardens. This behaviour would be expected to continue after the completion of the building work and therefore it is considered that the proposal for this site will not have a detrimental effect on the local bat population.

Please note that this survey records the status of the building at the time of the survey. However, if several months were to elapse before the commencement of the building work, it is considered unlikely, due to the lack of potential roosting places, that bats would colonise the site during the intervening period.

## 7) Review of existing records of bats in the area

Since the early 1980s, the Essex Bat Group has monitored the status and distribution of bats in this area. Records occurring within a 2km radius of the site are as follows:

TL582259	16 Oct 2008	Natterer's bat droppings found in outbuilding
TL582259	16 Oct 2008	Brown long-eared bat droppings found in outbuilding
TL605275	24 May 2007	Natterer's bat roost in barn
TL605275	24 May 2007	Common pipistrelle recorded foraging
TL605275	24 May 2007	Brown long-eared bat roost in barn
TL595275	09 Aug 2005	Natterer's bat roost in barn
TL595275	09 Aug 2005	Common pipistrelle roost in barn
TL599276	30 Oct 2006	Natterer's bat droppings found in outbuilding
TL588257	17 Jul 2008	Pipistrelle droppings found in building
TL583260	30 Oct 2004	Brown long-eared bat droppings in outbuilding
TL582260	16 Oct 2008	Pipistrelle droppings found in outbuilding
TL608254	21 Oct 2008	Natterer's bat roost in barn
TL609255	12 Jul 2013	Brown long-eared bat roost in building
TL599276	06 Apr 2011	Brown long-eared bat recorded foraging
TL599276	06 Apr 2011	Common pipistrelle recorded foraging
TL599265	25 Jul 2014	Common pipistrelle roost in church
TL599265	25 Jul 2014	Brown long-eared bat roost in church

## 8) Recommendations for reasonable biodiversity enhancements

**1:** It is recommended that the existing gaps along the site boundaries are retained to allow hedgehogs and common toads to forage across the site as, potentially, at present. However if boundary fences are to be introduced, see below:



**Photo 11:** Hedgehog pathway at base of fence

Hedgehogs travel around **one mile** every night through our parks and gardens in their quest to find enough food and a mate. If you have an enclosed garden this can prevent hedgehogs from dispersing throughout their territory. It is now known that one of the main reasons why hedgehogs are declining in Britain is because our fences and walls are becoming more and more secure, reducing the amount of land available to them. Developers can make their life a little easier by removing the barriers within their control – for example, by making holes in or under our garden fences and walls for them to pass through.

**A gap 13cm by 13cm is sufficient for any hedgehog to pass through. This will be too small for nearly all pets.**

Alternatively:

- Remove a brick from the bottom of the wall
- Cut a small hole in your fence if there are no gaps
- Dig a channel underneath your wall, fence or gate

**2:** A Hedgehog nesting box to be sited at base of a boundary.

**3:** Two solitary bee hives to be erected at the site.

**4:** Two bird nesting boxes to be erected on trees, fences or buildings at the site.