

The Garage

The Connery, Connery Lane, Bronington

**Method Statement to facilitate the
development of a garage into a residential property
with regards to bat species**

August 2015

Produced by



www.wildbanksconservation.com

METHOD STATEMENT FOR THE GARAGE BUILDING AT THE CONNERY, BRONINGTON IN REGARDS TO BAT SPECIES.

This statement is to be provided to Mr P. Bratt and to the contractors who will be conducting the development works to the garage at The Connery, Bronington, and whose work will affect bat roosts. It should be present on site at all times. This Method Statement is applicable only to the development of the garage building and does not include any other buildings at this location.

This Method Statement should be read in conjunction with the Bat Report dated 5th May 2015.

Introduction and Surveys

In May 2015, Wildbanks Conservation was commissioned by Mr P Bratt to undertake a visual assessment and a nocturnal survey on the garage building with regards to bat species. The visual assessment was undertaken on 23rd April 2015 and a nocturnal return to roost survey on 4th May by a licenced bat ecologist and an assistant. The surveys were carried out in accordance with recognised guidelines published by the Bat Conservation Trust.

Results

Evidence of 3 bat roosts were observed during the return to roost survey, with 3 common pipistrelles *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* seen entering the building at 3 different locations (Figure 1). In addition, bats were seen investigating areas beneath eaves at the southern gable end. Accumulations of droppings on the external wall on the north eastern elevation and the west elevation may indicate the possibility of additional occasional roosting sites. It is thought that a small number of common pipistrelle bats are roosting within the building in at least 3 locations. Common pipistrelle bats are the most common and widespread bat in the UK (Avery, 1991 and Altringham, 2003) and they often have multiple roosts within their territory and frequently move between them through the year. Common pipistrelle bats also readily take to new roosting features and are capable of tolerating disturbance better than other species.

Legislation

All bat species are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Conservation (Natural Habitats & C) Regulations 1994. As a result it is illegal to damage or disturb any bat roost, whether occupied or not, or harm a bat. **Prosecution could result in imprisonment, fines of £5,000 per animal affected and confiscation of vehicles and equipment used.** In order to minimise the risk of breaking the law it is essential to work with care to avoid harming bats, to be aware of the procedures to be followed if bats are found during works, and to commission surveys and expert advice as required to minimise the risk of reckless harm to bats.

Finding Roosts

Bats and their roosts can be very difficult to detect. A pipistrelle bat is small enough to fit into a match box and roosts in cracks just 14-20mm wide. Common locations for roosts within buildings include beneath the slates or tiles, in crevices between the brickwork, particularly where these extend to the rubble fill or wall cavity, in gaps within mortice joints, around window frames and behind barge boards and soffit boxes.

Proceeding without a licence

Bat roosts were identified within The Garage at the Connery in 3 locations (Figure 1, R1, R2 & R3). The roosts were occupied by individual bats and situated within the external structure of the building, it is believed that conversion of the building can progress without the need for a European Protected Species licence on condition that:

- All development works are conducted outside of the main bat season (May-September) and that the ‘new’ roosting features are available for when the bats return to roost by the following April. Resulting in the roost being only temporarily unavailable
- “like for like” roosts are protected / provided (under the supervision of a licenced ecologist)
- “continual ecological functionality” of the site is maintained
- A follow up survey is undertaken in the optimum season (May-August) to provide evidence that roosts have not been lost and bats have returned to the building.
- Furthermore, two additional roosting opportunities are provided within the ridge line and at the north eastern corner of the building.

Working Approach

Only 1 species of bat; the common pipistrelle was found to be using the building as a roosting site. As this species are crevice dwelling, replacement provisions can be incorporated on to the building in exactly the same place as the original roost was found. These locations are found on Figure 1 (R1, R2 & R3). Further roosting opportunities will be created at locations R4.

Roost 1

The roosting site was located within a gap under the eave on the southern gable end of the building. This roost site can be maintained by leaving an appropriate sized gap under the eave in the same location.



Roost 2

The roost was behind the fascia board located above a wooden door to the building on the eastern aspect. This roost site can be maintained by leaving an appropriate sized gap behind the new fascia board in the same location.



Roost 3

The third roosting site was a small hole located in the brickwork on the southern gable end. This should be left 'as is' and so the roost will not be affected in any way.



Roost 4

During the Visual Assessment two accumulations of bat droppings were recorded on the north-eastern corner of the building beneath the eaves and the western elevation. A new roosting site can be created by installing an 'Ibstock enclosed bat box' in the gable end of the northern elevation.

The national Planning Policy Framework recommends the local planning policy should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains on biodiversity where possible. Therefore the recommendations to add a new roost at R4 assists in a small way meeting this policy by increasing roosting opportunities for bats.

All works with regards to erecting the bat boxes will be carried out under the supervision of a licenced ecologist to ensure correct installation and location of the bat boxes. In addition, with regards to works on the building, the following points should be adhered to, ensuring no unlawful act is undertaken in regards to bats;

- Roof tiles should be removed with care, between September-March. Tiles should be lifted vertically and not slid to reduce the risk of harming a bat.
- Where it is necessary to fill holes/crevices, the full depth of the hole must be seen to ensure bats are not present.

- All contractors must wear gloves. Gloves are required as a precautionary method to reduce the risk of being bitten by any undiscovered bat.
- Use bat-friendly timber treatments.
- Incorporate any agreed design details (see above) to provide future bat roosting opportunities.

Nesting Birds

All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and therefore it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the dependant young of such a bird. **Prosecution could result in imprisonment, fines of £5,000 per animal affected and confiscation of vehicles and equipment used.** In order to minimise the risk of breaking the law it is essential to work with care to avoid harming any nest, to be aware of the procedures to be followed if an active nest is found during works, and to commission surveys and expert advice as required to minimise the risk of reckless harm.

Finding Nests

April-September is the main bird breeding season and birds often have more than one brood in this period. An empty nest may not stay empty for long and a previously empty hole may become occupied. Therefore, the following working approach should be followed to maintain legal compliance with regards to nesting birds if works are carried out within this time period.

If a nest is found with young or eggs, work must stop immediately and Wildbanks Conservation (contact details below) and the Project Manager should be contacted straight away.

Contact Details:

Wildbanks Conservation.

Mick Smith, Partner.

01978 710786, 07970998853,

info@wildbanksconservation.com

Details of additional roosting features installed at location R4

Bat boxes that can be built into the walls of buildings are designed specifically for crevice dwelling species such as Common pipistrelles. It is recommended that an Ibstock enclosed bat box is installed. Its dimensions are 215mm x 290mm x

Further details can be found at <http://www.ibstock.com/sustainability-ecozone.asp>

