PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEY OF "TANGLETREES" BUFTON DRIVE BOTCHESTON ROAD NEWTOWN UNTHANK LEICESTERSHIRE

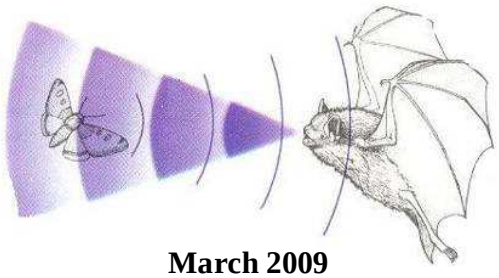
A report to:

David Granger Architectural Design Ltd.
The Old Dairy
Mill Street
Packington
Ashby-de-la-Zouch
Leicestershire
LE65 1WN

By:

B J Collins – Protected Species Surveyor
8 Rockleys View
Lowdham Grange
Lowdham
Nottingham
NG14 7DN

Tel: (0115) 9664468
E-mail: BJCollinsPSS@aol.com



March 2009

1.0 Introduction

1.1. This report has been prepared by B J Collins – Protected Species Surveyor for David Granger Design Ltd. The report provides the results of a protected species survey, focused upon bats (*Chiroptera*), of an occupied bungalow in advance of site re-development, which is anticipated to be an extension.

1.2. The building surveyed is located on the outskirts of the village of Newtown Unthank, in Leicestershire.

1.3. The objective of the survey was to establish whether the proposal would have any impact upon bats or their roosts.

Legislation applicable to Bats

1.4. All species of British bat and their roosts are protected under British law by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and bats are classified as European Protected Species under The Conservation (Natural Habitats, & c.) Regulations 1994. This makes it an offence to kill, injure or disturb a bat and to destroy any place used for rest or shelter by a bat.

1.5. Development works that affect a bat roost can only be permitted under a licence from Natural England. In such cases Natural England seek advice with both local and national statutory conservation advisors as to whether a licence should be granted.

1.6. Licences in respect of European Protected Species affected by this type of work can be granted under Regulation 44(2)(e) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, for the purpose of preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment.

1.7. Under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 licences can only be issued for a development if Natural England are satisfied that:

- There is no satisfactory alternative to the work specification and
- The action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

1.8. Natural England aim to process licence applications within 35 working days of receipt.

Breeding Birds

1.9. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), all native birds and their nests, whilst in use, are protected from harm, disturbance or destruction during the breeding season. As such any work that could affect breeding birds should be timed for outside the breeding season, variable between March and August.

2.0 Site Description

2.1. The site consists of a detached bungalow set in gardens adjacent to a small woodland area and other houses of a similar character. The bungalow is built of brick with a flat clay tile pitched roof. There are two flat-roofed dormer windows and a small flat-roofed annex at the rear of the property. This is connected with an outhouse/ utility room that has its own separate pitched and tiled roof with a small loft. The loft of the main house has already been converted to bedrooms, with cavities remaining on the lower pitches of the roof below window level to the rear of the property and adjacent to dormer level to the front (see plan in Appendix I).

2.2. There are three gable ends, two of which have rustic-style ship-lap boarding on them. The eaves are enclosed by plastic soffits.

3.0 Survey Methodology

3.1. The building was searched by an experienced, licensed bat worker in order to locate evidence of current or past bat roosts, in the form of bats, droppings, staining, feeding signs, and/or remains of bats. The outside of the buildings were searched for access points, and any evidence of their use by bats. The likely value of the various habitat features for foraging bats was also critically assessed. This survey was undertaken on the 16th March 2009.

3.2. An emergence and activity survey for bats was not carried out. This was because weather conditions were not conducive to bat activity and because the results of the daytime inspection suggested that such a survey was not necessary.

4.0 Results

4.1. Limited signs of bats were found on the exterior of the house, beneath the ship-lap boarding on the front elevation. Five bat droppings were found (See Target Note 1 in Appendix I), with the species concerned thought likely to be either pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus* sp.) or a small *Myotis* species (whiskered (*Myotis mystacinus*) or Brandt's (*M. brandtii*)). All of the droppings were considered to be only a few weeks old at the most. An endoscope inspection of the cavities behind the shiplap failed to find any bats, or signs of them.

4.2. The rest of the exterior was found, to a large extent, to be in good condition and there were very few potential access points for bats available, other than a second area of shiplap boarding and where mortar was missing from hanging tile ends on one dormer window (see Appendix I). Neither of these features would be affected by the proposed work.

4.3. No bats and no signs of bats were found on any part of the interior of the building. Connectivity between the roof voids that remained after loft conversion and the living space on the ground floor below was found to consist of large holes in the ceiling where repairs and installation of ducting etc. had not been completed. The likelihood of any roosting bats entering the living area through these holes was considered to be high. Since none had ever been encountered, and since no signs of bats were found, the presence of a roost in the voids was ruled out.

4.4. The roof void above the utility room was considered to be suitable for roosting bats but no signs were found. In addition, no obvious access point into this loft was found and it was choked with cobwebs, indicating that the void had remained undisturbed for some time.

5.0 Assessment and Recommendations

5.1. It is considered likely that the droppings found on the exterior of the house are evidence of a small roost of bats, probably pipistrelle bats. The lack of droppings or any other signs elsewhere inside or outside the building indicated that this was the extent of the uses made by bats of the building.

5.2. The development proposal is on the opposite side of the house to the development proposal and as such **there will be no impact upon the bat roost area**, simply because it is physically separate to the area where works will take place.

5.3. As a result the current proposed works to extend the building will have **no affect** on roosting bats. Therefore further survey and assessment of the site is not considered necessary. If, in the extremely unlikely event that a bat is discovered during work, the procedure outlined in Appendix II should be followed.

5.4. In future any re-treatment or replacement of the shiplap boarding occupied by bats should take place under advice from Natural England, via the Bat Helpline run by the Bat Conservation Trust (Tel: 0207 6272629). Close inspection of the crevices left by fallen mortar around the front dormer window should precede any repair, in order to ensure that bats are not entombed inside.

6.0 References

Bat Conservation Trust (2000) *Distribution Atlas of Bats in Britain and Ireland 1980-1999*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Bat Conservation Trust (2007) *Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs *CONSERVATION (NATURAL HABITATS, &c.) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2007: How the changes will impact on certain sectors and activities*

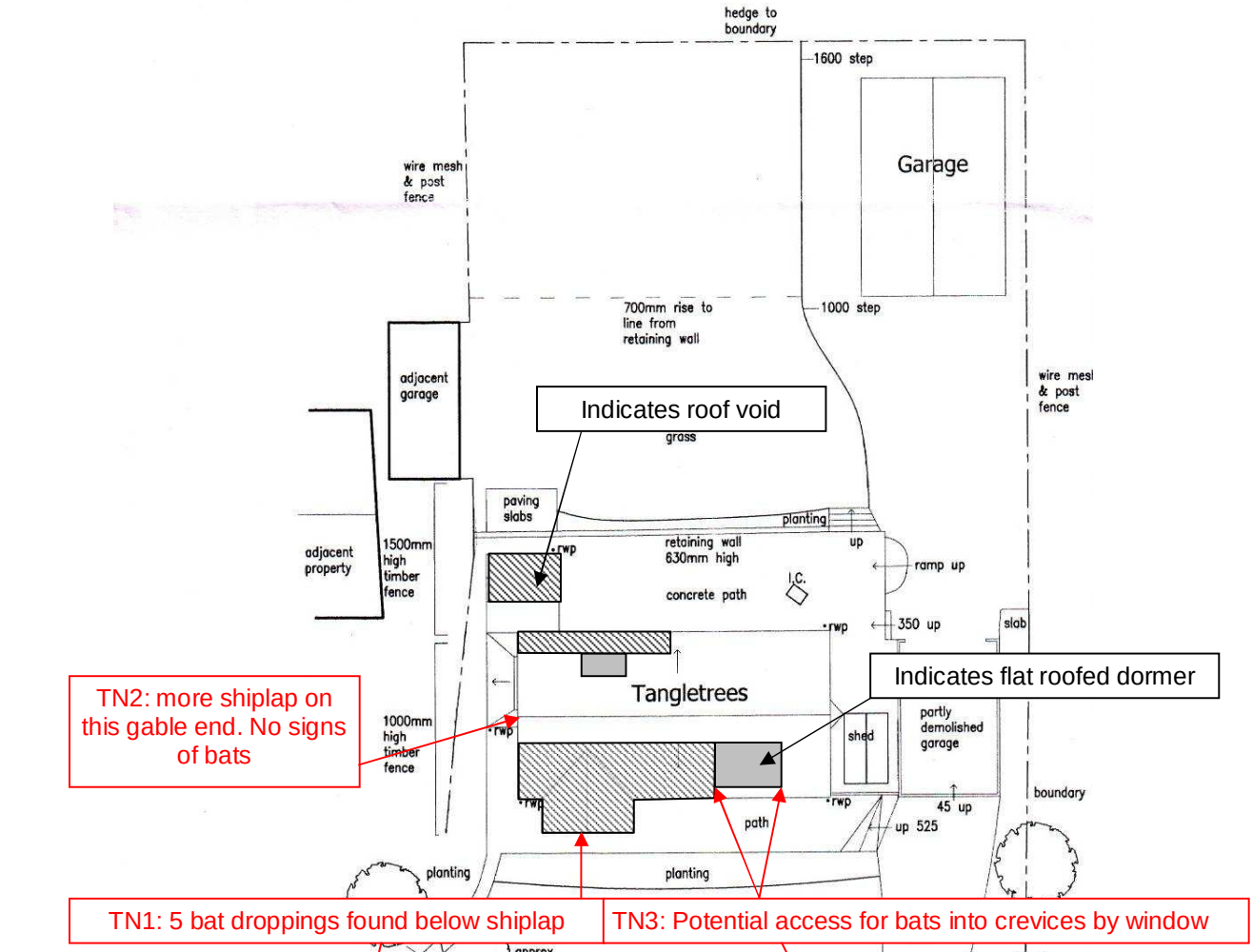
http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/ewd/habitats-qa.pdf

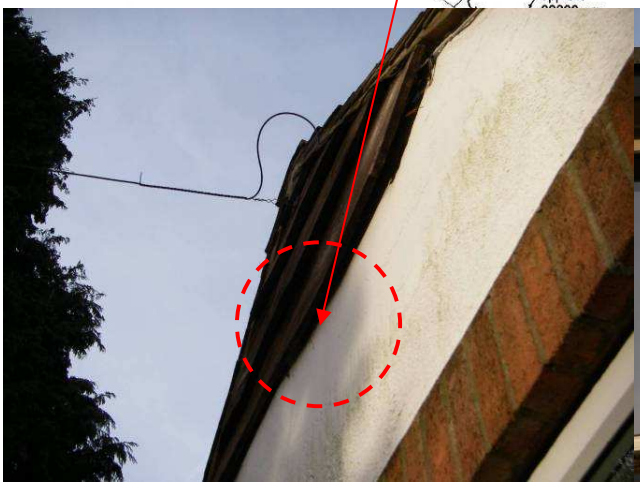
Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004). *The Bat Workers' Manual*. JNCC.

Mitchell-Jones (2004). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature.

Appendix I: Site layout, Target Notes and photographs

Site plan from Drawing 08.2403.01, David Granger Design







Appendix II: Procedure to follow if bats are discovered during demolition

- If at any point in the works bats are discovered then contractors must stop work immediately and telephone B J Collins PSS on 0115 9665568 or 07957 122217.

- B J Collins PSS will either provide an appropriately licensed bat worker to the site or provide a member of staff who will liaise directly with Natural England. Actions will then be taken following advice given. This may include removal of bats, but only where direct written or verbal permission is gained from Natural England.

- Bats are a protected species and there should be no attempt to handle a bat if discovered. The bat should be covered with a light material (cloth) and the bat ecologist called out to carry out the rescue.

- Only when Natural England is satisfied that the risk to bats is ceased will works recommence.

- Should it transpire that the operation being carried out is of more risk to bats than was originally thought, then works will be stopped until they can be supervised by an appropriately licensed bat worker.

- If a bat is found under a tile or any other aperture, works will stop immediately (as above). If the bat does not voluntarily fly out, then the aperture will be carefully covered over to protect the bat(s) from the elements, leaving a small gap for the bat to escape voluntarily. Any covering should be free from grease or other contaminants, and should not be a fibreglass-based material.