

BAT HABITAT ASSESSMENT SURVEY REPORT,
BALHAM BOXING CLUB,
CAVENDISH ROAD,
BALHAM, SW12 0PP.

Furesfen



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CONTROL SHEET

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Job Title. Bat habitat assessment report, Balham Boxing Club, SW12 OPP

Purpose Planning application for floodlighting for external use

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INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 Furesfen was asked to undertake bat habitat assessment at Balham Boxing Club, Cavendish Road, Balham. The investigation was necessary in order to determine if any protected species, might be affected by proposals to modernise floodlighting.

Proposals

- 1.2 The existing Redgra pitch requires a new hardstanding. The metal halide floodlights will be replaced with LED lighting. The survey was made to ensure that the light spillage from the new floodlights remains the same/decreases, so that there will be no impact on protected species.

Site Description

- 1.3 Tooting Common Triangle is designated as an area for sports and leisure and is a small unit of the much larger Tooting Common. The Children's centre is in the north corner and has an adjacent playground and garden. The boxing club is a metal rectangular structure to the west of the Children's Centre. There is a Redgra all weather football pitch to the east of the Centre. Floodlights are erected along the boundary of the centre as per cover page. There is a public right of way parallel to railside land at the rear of the buildings and pitch.
- 1.4 Tooting Common is classed as a Site of Metropolitan Importance (SMI). The habitat comprises acid grassland, secondary woodland, scrub and ponds. It is a large open space with extensive areas of woodland and acidic grassland in an area of London severely deficient in good wildlife sites. The woodland is dominated by oak, with a range of other trees including hornbeam and elm. It supports a good variety of woodland birds for an inner London site.
- 1.5 This report outlines the methodology and findings of a walkover undertaken at the site during 14.3.19.

Aims of Assessment

- 1.6 The purpose of this assessment was to:
- (a) Update the existing information;
 - (b) Determine any potential impacts on bats, or their roosts; posed by the lighting; and,
 - (c) Advise of any mitigation measures that may be required

METHODOLOGY

Desk study

- 2.1 Records were obtained using author's data from previous surveys including 2018; and MAGIC (Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside) website (<http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>).

Building Inspection

- 2.2 An Internal inspection was undertaken of the Centre and the Boxing Club during 14.3.19 accompanied by Mr C. Warren. An external building inspection was also undertaken. The survey was carried out using close focussing binoculars and a torch as required.
- 2.3 The surveys were undertaken by A. Fure Class 2 Bat Licence (Natural England licence number 2015-10381-CLS-CLS) a Chartered Environmentalist and a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).
- 2.4 The survey methods were in accordance with The Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines – 3rd Edition* (Collins, 2016), and *The Bat Worker's Manual* (Mitchell-Jones and McLeish, 2004).

Limitations

- 2.5 This survey does not comprise a full assessment of the presence/likely absence of bat roosts within the impact zone as only the Spring (pre- breeding period) has been investigated and Bat Conservation Trust Survey Guidelines require June, July and August survey data. However we have data from previous years surveys showing a lack of potential for bat ingress within the roof fabric of the building.

RESULTS

Desk study

3.1 Survey data records five bat species.

Table 1: Status of bats recorded in the local catchment.

| Species | Frequency | Main roosts sites |
|--|-----------------|--|
| Common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> | Common | Usually buildings Recorded during surveys / Bat walks 2007-2015 |
| Soprano pipistrelle <i>P. pygmaeus</i> | Common | Buildings and trees especially near water Recorded during bat walks as above including roosting near Woodfield pavilion, 2018 |
| Leislars bat <i>Nyctalus leisleri</i> | Rare | Roosts in trees Local presence of this species has been recorded at Wandsworth Common 2014, Streatham and Tooting Bec Common (P. Briggs bat walks). And strong presence during 2016 surveys |
| Noctule bat <i>Nyctalus noctula</i> | Less common | Recorded on Tooting Triangle during 2016 surveys |
| Serotine bat <i>Eptesicus serotinus</i> | Rarer in London | Recorded during Tooting Common 2016 surveys |

Adapted from Mitchell-Jones (2007)
2018

LBG=London Bat Group records authors data from 2016-

3.2 Bats were recorded using trees on the eastern side of Tooting Triangle for roosting purposes during surveys 2016, but not 2018. At a grove of oak trees at the path onto the Triangle, bats were recorded light sampling two minutes before sunset.

3.3 A large number of trees, particularly the oak species and the horse chestnuts contained voids suitable for roosting bats. The tree line along the rail-side land is important for commuting bats dispersing to foraging areas.

Building Inspection

External inspection Children's centre

3.4 The Children's centre is a brick built, single storey building with a part pitched, part sloping roof covered in bitumen 1F felt. It has tight fitting wooden soffits and metal shutters on the windows, large air bricks at regular intervals at the elevations and three large security lights on the rear wall.

3.5 There is a beautiful garden between the rear of the Centre and the sports pitch and two of the lighting columns can be seen from the garden, although one is fast disappearing behind a grove of silver birches possibly planted to act as a 'light shield'. The area is full of bird activity and birds use the perimeter of the pitch as well as the garden.

3.6 Above the door into the garden there was damage to metal security shuttering which exposed the eaves into the roof. A gap above the door lintel was also apparent and immediately adjacent was

a gap in the soffit formerly used to accommodate the metal shutter. This was the only gap in the soffit and the building was determined as of low potential for bat interest.

3.7 The rear of the building was examined and where there were found to be no potential gaps for bats, although the tree canopy overhangs the roof. This has led to some damage to drainage goods, which is in need of simple attention.

3.8 The internal inspection found a long, narrow building, which was largely open plan with roof rafters exposed. The roof was boarded with a type of fibreboard onto which bitumen felt was placed. There were gaps between the internal blockwork partitions and the fibreboard, but the rest was sealed.

3.9 The elevations were painted a light colour with no staining apparent. The floor surface was clean and there were no signs of mammal ingress. All rooms were entered including the junior and disabled toilets, store cupboards, and office.

External Inspection Boxing Club

3.10 The area between the Children's centre and the metal Boxing Club could be described as an alcove where the eaves of the building were exposed. This could only be accessed by a flying mammal by entering via (locked) grillage, but would be something bats are perfectly capable of undertaking in certain weather conditions. This aspect of the building is the furthest away from the impact of the floodlights. It is something to be considered when undertaking repairs.

3.11 There are toilets and storage rooms as well as an area with bench presses/equipment around the alcove. No droppings were found and the aspect was considered cold and not suitable for mammal ingress other than the area already described at the eaves.

Boxing ring

3.12 The Boxing ring is in a rectangular metal 'box' with a sophisticated ventilation system with a boiler room and gas flue at the western end. It is extremely well lit and has small storage rooms and office space that were entered.

Table 2. Photographs –



Photograph 1. Underside of roof in the centre



Photograph 2. Boxing ring



Photograph 3. Missing metal canopy with gap at eaves above door



Photograph 4. Gap at soffit (area adjacent to photo 3)

ASSESSMENT

Potential impacts

- 4.1 There was very little potential for protected species to use the external fabric of the building and the best places were on the offside – the eaves opposite the boxing ring of the building- from the sports pitch.
- 4.2 New lights have the potential to make a marginal improvement to the light spillage across the site. LED lights are considered to be more directional although they still attract insects. At this point in time it has not been possible to study the light contour plan to ascertain this.
- 4.3 New hard standing could cause damage to the margins where there is good habitat used by birds (see front cover) and a method statement should be provided with a paragraph on how this area will be protected.

Protection of bat Commuting and Foraging Habitat

- 4.4 All bats are dependent on dark, linear landscape features for movement across the site. Vegetation, particularly treelines are used by bats for a variety of functions. The desk study indicated a bat commuting route along the public path parallel to the railway, foraging in the matrix habitat and roosting in an oak near Woodfield pavilion. Trees provide for example:
 - roost sites: even small voids are used by bats on a transient basis in the summer;
 - commuting routes: to avoid open areas;
 - cover: especially during the early part of the evening and in urban centres where light levels are high; and
 - foraging areas: the trees are both an insect breeding habitat and offer a sheltered microclimate.

Artificial Lighting

- 4.5 Whilst some bat species, e.g. noctule bats have a propensity to fly above lighting installations, most bats don't, are repelled by lighting and shining a light onto a roost site could constitute an illegal disturbance.
- 4.6 As the wavelength of light decreases, the attractiveness to insects increases. High pressure sodium does attract some insects but on average 57% fewer insects than a Mercury vapour light source; LED's less so, although this has not been quantified to date.

A third of the insects that fly around light will damage themselves or die leaving less prey for foraging bats (Eisenbeis, 2006; Bruce White and Shardlow, 2011).

- 4.7 All species of bat found in Britain, and their roosts, receive protection under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) and Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). These legislative tools make it an offence for any person to:
- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
 - Intentionally or recklessly destroy a breeding or resting place (roost) of a bat; and,
 - Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access for bats to a roost or to otherwise significantly alter the structure of a roost so as to render it unsuitable to support roosting bats. This may preclude fragmentation of corridors caused by light pollution or tree removal and a useful discussion of this is provided by Garland and Markham (2007).
 - If a bat roost is to be affected by development activities, a licence from Natural England will need to be obtained.
- 4.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2019) seeks to achieve 'net biodiversity gain' within new development. As such, consideration should be given to enhancing the ecological value of the survey site in association with any proposals.
- 4.9 The Bat Conservation Trust and the Institute of Lighting Professionals have issued joint guidance which has a stepwise process for introducing lighting to an area (see mitigation table).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mitigation

- 4.10 Mitigation measures to avoid direct impacts bats and insects, including features with potential to support roosting bats, as well as maintain the ecological functionality should be provided and a few suggestions are made in table below.

| Table 3 | Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals Lighting Guidance 2018 (replaces 2009 Guidance) |
|---------|--|
| | 5 steps |
| 1. | Are bats present on site yes, there are records of 5 species in the local area and field records of pipistrelle bats light sampling from a tree roost |
| 2. | Detail the conservation importance of each habitat feature to the bats that are using them. Are roosts present on site? No, there are no potential roost features in trees or in dark areas of the building within the spill zone. Is commuting habitat present? Parallel to rail-side land to the north Is there foraging habitat? the garden |
| 3. | Avoid lighting on key habitat features: There is existing lighting due to be replaced |
| 4. | In other locations used by bats apply mitigation measures to reduce illumination to a minimum Set buffers There are natural buffers provided by maturing trees. Minimum lux measurements will be applied Landscaping N/A Curfew already in place |
| 5. | Demonstrate compliance: Post-completion surveys yes, one post-erection survey should be carried out to ensure that the light spillage is as per contour plan. Light curfews yes, the curfew will be from mid-May until mid- September Specific recommendations: Lights should not be on automatic switching and extinguished by 21.30 |
| 6. | Additional comments: Care should be taken when applying the new hardstanding so that the grassy margins of the pitch is not damaged. This area is used by bird. |
| 7. | Net Gain. This has been achieved in the new luminaires, which improve on metal halide. |

If bats are encountered during the proposed works then all works must cease immediately and a licensed bat ecologist must be called to site. In this event, works may not recommence until the ecologist has consulted Natural England and agreed a suitable and lawful way to proceed.

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