

Making buildings bat friendly

Green Ecology Guidance Note

Updated June 2010

Bat species that use buildings for roosting

Common pipistrelle

These are our smallest species and can fit into a space the size of a matchbox. Being crevice dwelling species they will crawl into any gaps on the outside of buildings as well as inside.

Brown long-eared bats

This species frequently roost within loft spaces along the ridge beam and require a large uncluttered space to fly in.

Natterer's

Frequently found in buildings this species roosts both in the open within loft spaces and within crevices throughout the building.

Whiskered/Brandt's

Like the pipistrelles and natterer's bats these species will roost within crevices both inside and outside the building.

Greater/Lesser horseshoe

These species are the only ones that hang upside down from roof timbers. They must fly straight into the roost and have room to fly within it.

Serotine

This larger species relies heavily on buildings for roosting. It uses any large crevice including cavity walls but often clusters around the chimneys and in roof ridges within the loft space.



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Common Pipistrelle.

Photo from www.arkive.org

Why bats need your help

Some bat species now rely almost exclusively on buildings for their roosting needs and return to the same roost year after year. British bat populations have fallen in recent years due to many factors that includes the demolition or redevelopment of existing buildings. Unless roosting sites can be easily incorporated into new buildings it is likely that the populations of British bats will continue to decline.

How you can help

You can help by following the advice within these guidance notes. Recommendations are made on how to incorporate roosting opportunities for bats within both new and existing buildings. These steps will help your development to enhance biodiversity in line with Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 9.

Roosts in existing buildings

The development of existing buildings that contain bat roosts require a European Protected Species licence from Natural England. This licence will include a very detailed method statement telling you what should happen, how it should happen and when it should happen. The information within this document is for guidance only and a method statement should be followed in the first instance.

Even if an existing building has little or no potential for bats it is possible to create roosting opportunities easily and inexpensively.

Why not give Green Ecology a call for a free, no-obligation quote for your bat survey? We can also help with a range of other services such as lighting plans, landscaping suggestions and ideas on how to incorporate roosts into your development.

Call now on **01647 253652** or email **devon@green-ecology.co.uk**

Retain lofts

If changes have to be made to existing lofts then any new materials should match those being replaced.

When re-creating lofts for bats:

- Existing access points must be retained, such as at wall tops under eaves, through gaps in tiles and through purpose-built entrances.
- A trussed rafter construction should be avoided so as to leave a large uncluttered space for bats to fly in.
- A bitumastic under felt should be used as bats cannot gain purchase on modern plastic linings and can potentially become entangled in other types of lining such as Tyvek.
- Areas of exposed, rough sawn timber should be provided for bats to grip onto.

Retain Crevices

Crevice dwelling species typically roost on the exterior of buildings and any gaps or holes should be retained. Such gaps include:

- Under wooden or tile wall cladding.
- In the space between roofing tiles and the liner behind.
- Under flashing around windows, chimneys and pipes.
- Within deep crevices in stone and brickwork.
- In the space within cavity walls should access points exist.
- Within soffit boxes.

If possible these features should be worked around during development. If this is not possible then the materials should be salvaged and these features reinstated upon completion.

Creating roosts in new buildings

A variety of roosting opportunities can be created for bats in new buildings without compromising current building regulations.

Design stage

Ideally bats should be considered at the design stage as there are many ways to incorporate roosting sites directly into the fabric of a building. Such as:

- Installing purpose built 'Bat bricks' directly into external walls.



- Providing access to an area of cavity wall by installing a purpose built entrance.



- Leaving gaps underneath cladding, flashing and roof tiles.



- Installing a bat box as high as possible for example at the apex of a gable end.

Bat boxes:

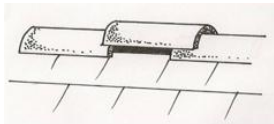
There are many different types of bat box on the market that cater for different species of bat and different roost types. If you have an existing roost your ecologist will advise you on the most suitable box to use. Otherwise a standard wooden box will provide roosting opportunities for a variety of crevice dwelling species.



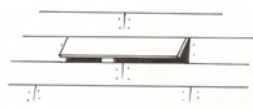
Creating Access:

Access into lofts and gaps under cladding and flashing can be created by:

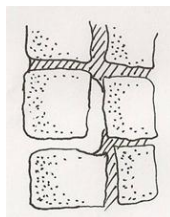
- Raising a roof tile to allow access to the space between the tiles and the lining.
- Raising a roof ridge or hip ridge tile to allow access to the tunnel underneath.



- Opening a section of cladding to allow access to the space behind.



- Leaving deep crevices in stonework or brickwork by not filling some small areas with mortar.



Lighting:

Bats are nocturnal and will not roost where light levels are too high. When installing roosting sites you need to ensure that no light falls onto the roost from security or street lighting. This may mean that you will have to design a lighting plan that will allow for a dark pathway leading to the roost to improve the likelihood that bats will find and use the roost.

Landscaping:

Tall vegetation close to a building can be used to guide bats to new roost locations. By installing a small water feature and planting native and wildlife friendly shrubs nearby you are likely to attract a range of insects that bats prey on thus further increasing the probability that bats will find your newly created roost.

Further information:

- Green Ecology (01647) 253652 www.green-ecology.co.uk
- The Bat Conservation Trust (0845) 1300228 www.bats.org.uk
- Natural England (0845) 6003078 www.naturalengland.org.uk

Bat box/brick suppliers:

Ibstock Brick Ltd:
www.ibstock.com

Jacobi Jayne:
www.jacobijayne.com

Schwegler: www.schwegler-nature.com