

Bat Survey

25 Ryhill Way, Reading
Berkshire, RG6 4AX

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Non-technical Summary

Background

In April 2026, Crossman Associates was commissioned to undertake a bat survey of 25 Ryhill Way, Reading RG6 4AX. Development proposals include an extension.

Methods

The scoping survey was undertaken by Miguel Canovas, an experienced ecologist and licenced bat worker. The building was inspected both externally and internally for any evidence of bat / bird presence, such as droppings, food remains, staining or actual bats / birds.

Results

The dwelling is located within a residential area. Overall, the dwelling remains in good condition and provide no features suitable for roosting bats or nesting birds. The garden is well-maintained.

The property has **negligible** suitability for roosting bats.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the following be undertaken as part of the development:

- A precautionary approach to development regarding bats.
- Install a bird nest box on the building.
- Exterior lighting planned sensitive to nocturnal wildlife.

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1. Background

- 1.1. In April 2026, Crossman Associates was commissioned to undertake a bat survey of 25 Ryhill Way, Reading RG6 4AX. Development proposals include an extension. (Ordnance Survey grid reference: SU 73454 69624).
- 1.2. Figure 1 under Appendix II provides a site location map.
- 1.3. The objectives of the survey were to:
 - Assess the likely presence or absence of bats.
 - Identify any legislative or planning policy constraints relevant to the site.
 - Determine the need for further surveys, compensation, or mitigation.

Site Description

- 1.4. The site comprises a two-storey detached house (loft converted), which is in a residential area in Lower Earley, Reading, Berkshire. The property has a maintained garden of patio/lawns.
- 1.5. The property is adjoined by similar detached properties with maintained gardens.
- 1.6. The environs are predominately residential with a mix of medium/large properties. The wider landscape includes parkland and woodland.

Legislation

- 1.7. In the UK all species of bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended and the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations. Under this legislation it is a strict liability offence to injure or destroy a bat or to disturb damage or destroy the resting place of a bat. Under this

legislation the UK is obliged to fully consider bats within the planning process and the level of bat activity on-site must be fully assessed prior to the assessment the planning application.

- 1.8. In Britain all wild birds are granted legal protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) (as amended). This legislation protects the birds, their eggs and nests whilst being built or in use.

2. Methodology

Desktop Study

Data search

- 2.1. The MAGIC website was accessed to gain information on any statutory site designations within 4 km of the site that are designated for bats.

National Planning Policy

- 2.2. National Planning Policy has been reviewed for policies that relate to nature conservation relevant to the site.

Field Survey

Bat scoping survey

- 2.3. A bat scoping survey was carried out on the 29th April 2026 by Miguel Canovas, an experienced ecologist and licenced bat worker.
- 2.4. The building was methodically inspected internally and externally for any evidence of roosting bats, including actual bats, droppings, urine staining and evidence of feeding activity such as discarded insect wings and cases.
- 2.5. The building was also assessed for its suitability to support roosting bats by considering several factors including whether bats can access internal and external voids within the building and whether these voids provide adequate protection and shelter for roosting bats. If the building is not confirmed as a roost, it is assessed from High to Negligible Suitability as follows;

- **High Suitability** – many roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be old, large and rural

- **Moderate Suitability** – some roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be old, rural with some recent maintenance
- **Low Suitability** – few roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be modern, urban and well maintained
- **Negligible Suitability** – insignificant roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be small, modern, urban and very well maintained.

Birds

- 2.6. The building was also inspected for the presence of birds including house sparrow *Passer domesticus*. The building was checked for field signs including nesting material, accumulations of droppings and/or pellets.

3. Results

Desktop Study

Data Search

- 3.1. The MAGIC website informed that there are no statutory sites within 4 km of the site designated for bats.

Planning Policy

- 3.2. National policy guidance is provided by National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024), which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied to planning applications;

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- Planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
 - a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
 - b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
 - c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;

- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

Habitats and Biodiversity

- To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:
 - a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity⁶⁸; wildlife corridors and steppingstones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
 - b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.
- When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons⁷⁰ and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

Field Survey

Bat scoping survey

- 3.3. The external and internal conditions of the buildings are described in the table below and photographs can be found in Appendix II.

- 3.4. A table within Appendix III; information sheets set out the criteria for the way a building is assessed for its potential to support roosting bats.

Building	Feature	Feature Description	Bat suitability
25 Ryhill Way, Reading	Overview	Two-storey detached house with a semi-detached garage. The property is in good condition and is currently occupied. No bats or evidence of bats were found inside or outside of the property.	Negligible Suitability ☒
	Exterior	The brick walls are in good condition; no gaps or cracks were observed. The windows and doors are all well-sealed. The garage is in good condition. The property has a maintained patio/lawn garden.	
	Interior	Areas of living accommodation are composed of well-sealed rooms with plaster and painted walls and ceilings. The roof void is insulated compost of exposed timbers and lined with type 1 bituminous sarking felt. No gaps were observed.	
	Roof	Tightly fitted concrete roof tiles with no gaps observed. All roof verges remain well-sealed, areas of the eaves and where lead flashing is used to seal roof abutments remain tightly fitted in place.	

Birds

- 3.5. No birds or bird nesting activity was recorded in any aspect of the buildings.

Evaluation

- 3.6. The buildings are located within a residential area and lies near to parklands and woodlands with habitats likely to function as commuting and foraging resource for bats.
- 3.7. During the scoping survey, no droppings, staining, feeding remains or actual bats were observed. The buildings are in good condition and well-maintained. All verges and eaves/ soffits are in good condition and fit tightly. The property is constructed from modern and uniform material and lacks any abiotic roosting opportunities.
- 3.8. The property has **negligible suitability** for roosting bats.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1. The recommendations in the paragraphs below are provided to help ensure that wildlife and important ecological features are protected during the course of works. Recommendations also set out mitigation measures to minimise harm where this cannot be avoided and provide compensation measures to allow the proposals to meet current legislative and planning policy objectives.
- 4.2. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) states that a public authority must 'in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity; Conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat'.
- 4.3. The NPPF (2024) states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

Species recommendations

Bats

- 4.4. Due to the lack of evidence of roosting bats within any aspect of the buildings on site, it is not considered necessary or beneficial to undertake any further survey work.
- 4.5. Due to the site be nearby parklands, woodland and the transitory nature of bats, there remains a very small possibility that bats could be encountered during the works; therefore, all works must proceed under a precautionary approach. Tiles and roof panels will be removed in a vertical rather than horizontal sliding motion.

Soffits and masonry will be dismantled using a 'soft' approach taking care with cavity walls where present. All site workers will always be vigilant and in the very unlikely event that a bat is found, then works must stop immediately and advice should be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

Lighting

- 4.6. The site lies near to parkland and woodland, these habitats are likely to support a number of species of bat; typical species that would be likely to be present include common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle, therefore any exterior lighting that is to be employed should be of the modern LED-type and should take into account the presence of bats and avoid over illumination of the garden, trees and adjacent properties. This can be achieved by using directional lights and or cowl.

Biodiversity enhancements

Birds

- 4.7. During the construction phase of the works, there is an opportunity to incorporate inexpensive ecological enhancements that aim to increase the biodiversity of the site.
- 4.8. Swifts (*Apus apus*) are a declining species in the UK, largely due to the loss of suitable nesting sites in modern and renovated buildings. To support local biodiversity, fulfil policy objectives and contribute to swift conservation efforts, it is recommended that
- At least one swift nest box be installed on the building.
- 4.9. The nest box should be positioned at least 4 m above ground level, under the eaves or on an appropriate sheltered wall, with a clear flight path and minimal disturbance. Ideally, the box should face north or east to avoid excessive heat exposure.

- 4.10. For a long-term, low-maintenance solution, we recommend incorporating the Action for Swifts S Brick into the development. The S Brick is a discreet, integrated nest box designed to be built directly into the structure of the building, providing a secure and permanent nesting site without affecting aesthetics or maintenance requirements. Models can be found on www.actionforswifts.com.

5. Limitations

- 5.1. This report records wildlife found during the survey and anecdotal evidence of sightings. It does not record any plants or animals that may appear at other times of the year and were therefore not evident at the time of visit.
- 5.2. The advice contained in this report relate primarily to factual survey results and general guidance only. On all legal matters you are advised to take legal advice.

6. References

Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) *Bats and Lighting in the UK* BCT

HMSO (1981) *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and subsequent amendments)*. HMSO

HMSO (1995) *Biodiversity*. The UK Steering Group Report

Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) *Common Standards Monitoring Guidance for Reptiles and Amphibians* (2004) JNCC

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

Mitchell-Jones, A.J, & McLeish A.P. (2012) *The Bat Worker's Manual* (4th Edition)

Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)
Website at www.magic.gov.uk

Stace, C. (1997) *New Flora of the British Isles 2nd Edition*. Cambridge University Press

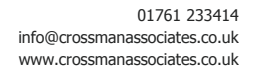
TSO (2021) *National Planning Policy Framework*. TSO

TSO (2006) *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act* TSO

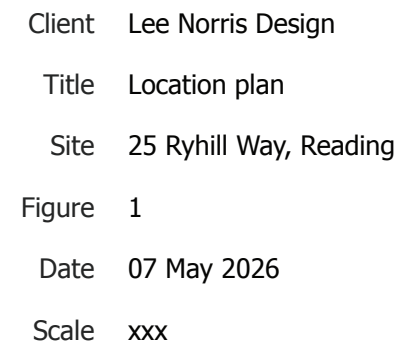
Appendix I – Site Figures



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Site location



Appendix II – Site Photographs



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Photographs 1- 3



Photograph 1:

Western elevation



Photograph 2:

Northwestern elevation



Photograph 3:

Eastern elevation

Photographs 4 - 6



Photograph 4:

Garage and house wall



Photograph 5:

Garage and house wall and soffits



Photograph 6:

Garage interior

Dwelling roof void



Appendix III – Information Sheets



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Bat Habitat Suitably Criteria

Bat Roosting Suitability	Criteria	Survey requirement to prove likely absence
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.	No further survey work required
Low	A building, structure or tree with one or more potential roosting sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically; however, these possible roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used by large numbers of bats and are unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation roosts.	One activity survey
Medium	A building, structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to the size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habit, but is unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.	Two activity surveys
High	A building, structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.	Three activity surveys

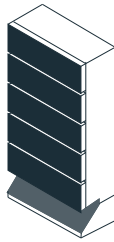
Survey requirements are taken from Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (2024), which is the recognised industry standard guidance used by local planning authorities and other statutory consultees.

Bat Tubes

Woodcrete Bat Tubes

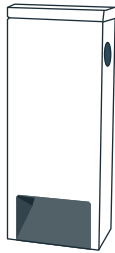
We recommend the use of woodcrete-type bat tubes that are manufactured by Habibat or Schwegler. These are a well known brands so are always accepted as a compensation measure for planning applications and Natural England Licence applications. The tubes also have a low visual impact on the development because they can be built into the exterior wall and then rendered or painted, or in the case of the Habibat, faced with brick or stone.

Recommended bat tubes



Habibat

The great advantage of the Habibat box is that it can be faced with brick, stone or render, so that it blends in and doesn't alter the aesthetic of the build.



Schwegler 1FR & 2FR

There are two similar designs that we use regularly. The 1FR is designed to be used singularly whereas the 2FR has transverse connecting holes (model shown) that allow tubes to be connected together.

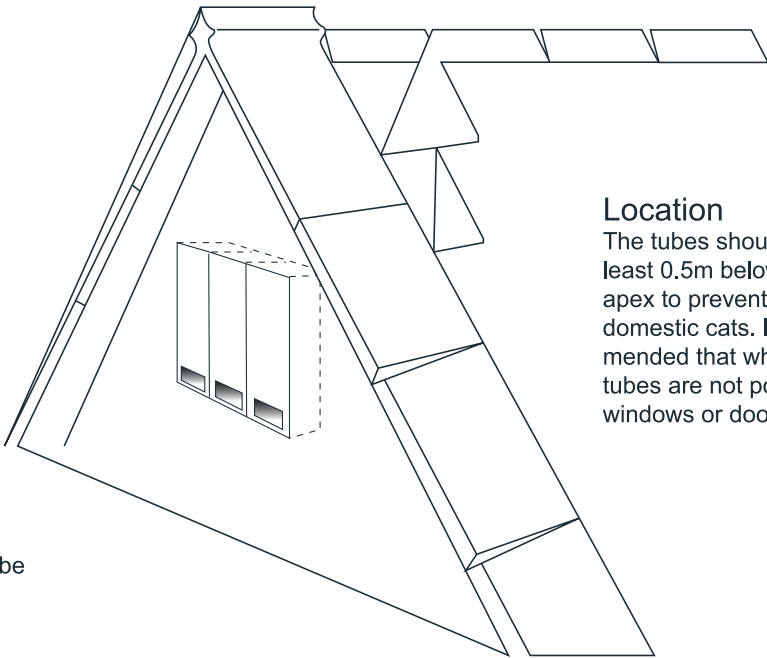
Specifications

Height	44 cm
Width	21 cm
Depth	10 cm
Weight	7 kg

Height	47.5 cm
Width	20 cm
Depth	12.5 cm
Weight	9.8 kg

How Many to Install

The number of bat tubes to install is dependent on the level of compensation or mitigation that is required. Typically one tube is recommended on sites where there are low number of bats and multiple groups of tubes are recommended on sites of high ecological significance.



Location

The tubes should be positioned at least 0.5m below the eave or gable apex to prevent predation by domestic cats. It is also recommended that where practical, the tubes are not positioned above windows or doors.

Installation

The tubes should be built into the exterior wall of the building, typically at the gable apex. The tubes should be installed flush with the surrounding wall and can then be rendered or painted with breathable paint if required.

Bat Tubes

Bat tubes are an excellent way to provide discreet and low impact roosting opportunities for certain species of bats that tend to occupy crevices within buildings. They are relatively compact and can be installed flush or beneath a rendered surface and can be painted with an air permeable paint if required.

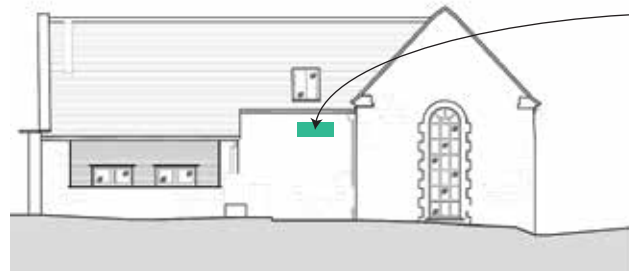


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Bird Boxes for Buildings

Woodcrete Bird Boxes

We recommend the use of woodcrete bird boxes. The boxes are long-lasting and have a low visual impact on a development because they can be built into the exterior wall. In the case of Habibat, boxes can be rendered, or faced with brick or stone.



How Many to Install

The number of bird boxes depends on the level of compensation or mitigation that is required, and depends on the level of bird activity and the scale of the development. Generally one box or a small group of boxes is sufficient.

Location

Bird boxes are best positioned under the eaves of the dwelling as shown on the left. The tops of the boxes should be positioned a short distance below the eaves by approximately 100-200 mm. Boxes should ideally not be located above windows or doors.

Encouraging Birds Is Simple

Installing bird boxes is an easy, cost-effective way to support declining species. They provide vital nesting spaces for birds in built environments—helping biodiversity thrive right where you live or work



Habibat Sparrow Terrace

A simple, durable wooden nest box designed for house sparrows. Install in groups under eaves or on walls to mimic colony nesting and support declining urban sparrow populations.



Schwegler Sparrow Terrace

A long-lasting wood-concrete terrace with three nesting chambers for house sparrows. Encourages colony breeding, excellent insulation, and weather resistance for year-round protection. Mount under eaves or high walls.



Woodstone House Martin Box

Made from breathable wood-concrete, this twin nest replicates natural house martin cups. Fix beneath roof overhangs on north or east elevations.



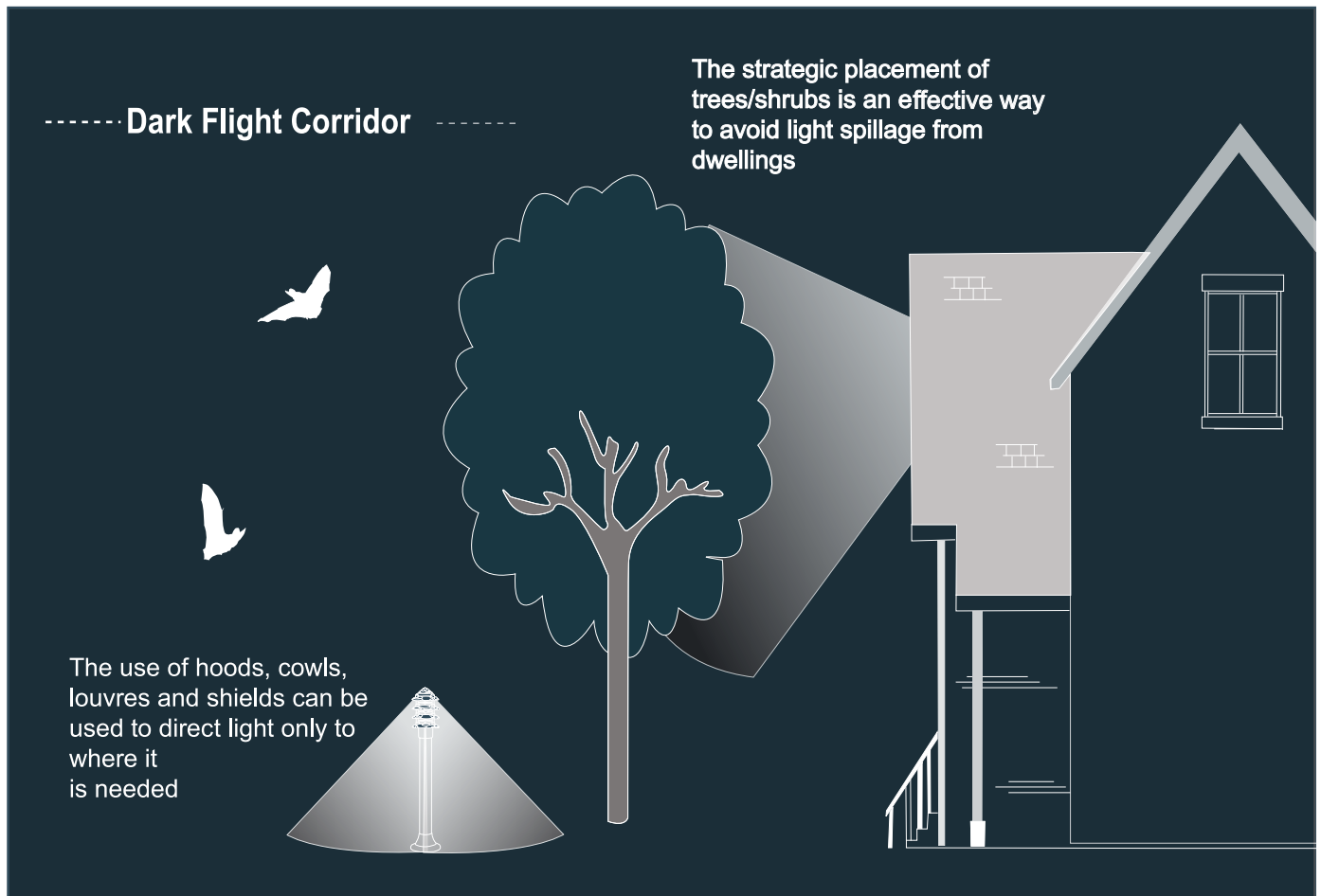
Swift AFS S Box

Purpose-built, durable nest box for common swifts, made from recycled wood-concrete. Suitable for wall or eaves mounting at least 5 m high with clear flight access.



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Sensitive Lighting for Bats



Lamp Type

The impact of light on bats can be minimised by the use of low/high pressure sodium lamps.

Lighting Column

The height of lighting columns should be kept as low as possible to reduce the impact of light spill. For example, when designing lighting for pedestrian walkways, use short bollard lights that produce a low level light (as low as 3 lux) directed downwards.

Light Mapping

Mapping the light spill of a lighting scheme using computer software can prove essential in designing schemes that are fit for purpose, that minimise energy costs and create dark light corridors and foraging areas for bats.

Light Levels

Proposed light levels within landscape plans should be as low as possible. If lighting is not needed, don't light.

Timing of Lighting

The times at when lighting is left on should be limited where possible. The use of movement sensors and timers for lights is useful for saving energy and reducing the amount of time a light is left on.

Impacts of Light on Bats

As nocturnal mammals, light causes disturbance to bats and many species will actively avoid lit areas. The illumination of bat roosts can delay bats emerging and thus shorten their foraging time and may eventually lead to bats abandoning their roost. The illumination of foraging or commuting areas may also lead to an increase in the rate of predation of bats by predators.



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