

External Lighting Design: Minimising the impact on nocturnal mammals

Lighting and bats are a topic we are working with most days and have over the course of quite a few projects we have now learnt how to work with bats and develop lighting schemes for exteriors which are suitable and supportive of ecology within all scales and types of projects we are working in.

Our design for lighting the external elements of the Treehouse development has been one where we want to minimise light pollution and poor-quality lighting design, but equally achieve the aspirations of the client as a key hospitality venue within the city centre. In comparison to the existing external lighting at street level and building mounted equipment within the immediate area adjacent to the site and Deansgate, we believe our scheme has been carefully considered in its development to mitigate as best as possible light spill and sky glow.

Therefore, in terms of our design all light is kept and directed to the surfaces of illumination we require. Care has been taken not to spill light through luminaire optical control further than where required and create more light pollution. Furthermore, the lights are all controllable and dimmable in zones, so if issues were to arise, or there were specific times of year in which we were required to reduce light levels (such as when the bats are leaving the roost) we would be able to support a wider scheme of lighting reduction during this period with our external lighting.

If the lights were to be controlled differently at specific times of the year, we would require a species-specific ecology report and direct request which helps us resolve that issue at the times it is most needed in this specific area. We would love to see this type of action and hope that the property neighbours along this route would also control their lighting for these times too to help the bats prosper and live alongside ourselves within the city. We believe schemes like this and are mentioned in Item 4.6 are not difficult to achieve and we would be happy to be part of a wider scheme to support this if contacted by the relevant parties, as we believe working together with our neighbours would be a great way to enhance bat activity.

It is also to note that the external lighting starts above the tree level of the canal route and is warm white (2700K), and therefore above where most of the bat activity will be. We do agree that all light at all levels does have an effect on the bats, but we feel in this instance, and in terms of our exterior lighting design proposals we are not floodlighting, or putting direct light into this corridor or pathway for bat activity.

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