

Case Record



Bats at the Joyce Hospital



Location	Kent, UK
Client	Dartford & Gravesham NHS Trust
Main Contractor	Carillion Building Special Projects
Facilities Management	Carillion Services

The closure of Joyce Green and West Hills Hospitals and their replacement with the new facility at Darent Park, the Darent Valley Hospital.

The hospital has been fully operational since September 2000.

Environmental Initiatives

Wildlife Protection	Protecting the bats on site.
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The Carillion Building Special Projects team moved onto the old Joyce Hospital grounds to demolish the 76 buildings on the site. However, a local enthusiast warned the team as they moved onto site of the likely presence of bats. Action would be needed if this were the case as it is illegal to disturb a bat roost except under licence.

The first step was to get expert help and advice. Environmental consultants Casella Stanger conducted a survey and found that among the 76 buildings on site, 21 showed signs of bat habitation.

The situation depended on the time of year. It was September; the bats would have just gone into hibernation and bats only hibernate until March. It is easiest to move them when they are dormant. There is a short window of 'free-flying'. After June 1st, the breeding season begins and they cannot be disturbed at all.

A method statement was prepared for the project. In collaboration with subcontractors and with support from English Nature a licence application was submitted in January. This was issued in February, a fast turnaround mainly due to the competent method statement.

With the license it was then possible to start moving the bats. Specialist, Peter Smith handled this delicate process. It was found that the bats were in the old window box sashes as well as the roofs. Therefore, the team had to carefully dismantle every window frame to check if there was a bat inside. Pipistrelle, Long-eared and Brown bats were found in the buildings. The Pipistrelle is relatively common but the other two are more of a rarity.

Fifteen bats were transferred, one by one, to new roosting boxes in trees on the site. The trees themselves were protected by preservation orders. All of the bats were transferred safely, without waking, so causing as little distress as possible. Bat number six did try to escape but after being caught several times was eventually moved to the new home.

Carillion agreed to monitor and maintain the roosts for five years. This will protect the bats throughout the demolition and redevelopment of the site, making sure that the bat colony settles and thrives.