

Appropriate Housing for Urban Bats

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Bats might not be the first wild creatures that come to mind when you think of species threatened by urban growth, but in London, declining bat biodiversity has captured the interest and concern of one artist and several institutions who together have launched a competition to design a bat house. Artist [Jeremy Deller](#) produces socially and politically-charged work primarily focused on the UK, but it was in Texas, while filming a documentary in 2003 (for which he won the [Turner Prize](#) in 2004), where he found his love of bats and established an ongoing commitment to their protection. He came back to the UK with a plan to create a public sculpture that could also house displaced bats. Soon the idea grew and became a collaborative national project.

In partnership with the [Bat Conservation Trust](#), the [Arts Council of England](#), the [RSA's Arts and Ecology](#) program, and [London's Mayor, Ken Livingstone](#), [The Bat House Project](#) launched a series of design challenges and a competition to collaboratively design a new house for London bats.

The Project highlights the potential for architects, builders, home-owners and conservationists to work together to produce wildlife-friendly building design. It connects the worlds of art and ecology to encourage public engagement with ecology issues. The Project builds on the Mayor of London's policies to raise awareness of urban biodiversity and to support the survival of London's ten bat species. Architects, designers, bat enthusiasts and schoolchildren are invited to submit creative ideas for a Bat House for London – a building of aesthetic and environmental excellence, built with sustainable materials, that offers homes to bats and an educational visitor attraction for people.

The competition closes in September, so if you're a bat-lover or aspiring bat house architect, you still have time to submit your ideas. The winning proposal will be built at the WWT London Wetland Centre, Barnes, West London. Hopefully we'll have a chance to see images of the final product.

