City of Jacksonville
Historic Preservation Commission
FALL 2011 NEWSLETTER

Going Batty: Bat Eviction Basics

Once bats move into a house, they rarely move out unless evicted… Here's how to make your building bat-free zone.

Bats reduce bugs to help the environment; 1 bat can eat 3,000 insects a night. You may never know you have a few bats in the attic, but a colony can be noisy, smelly, and unhealthy. With fewer natural areas, bats like old houses for the many entry points: loose vent screens, chimneys, separated flashing, spaces in siding or soffits, and gaps where materials shrunk, warped or moved. Bats only need a 3/8" by 1" crack or a hole the size of a quarter to enter.

Three bat species are likely to roost in old-houses: big brown bats, little brown bats (both in Canada and US), and Mexican free-tailed bats (south and west US). A sizeable colony of big brown bats may be a dozen; little brown bats may be several hundred; Mexican free-tailed bats can be thousands. Bat killing is inhumane, impractical, and usually illegal: 8 species are on the Federal Endangered Species List and each state has its own list. It is hard to tell which bats homeowners have since some may live together. Bats are rarely dangerous; only about .5% of all bats have rabies.

Before eviction, consider giving a housing option with a bat house on the property. A bat house resembles big birdhouse with entry holes on the bottom and can be cleverly decorated. Inside, they have several crevices so bats can roost in layers.

For long-term eviction, forget ultrasonic deterrents, mothballs, or aerosol sprays. For proper exclusion, cover bat entries with netting or tubes that let bats out, but not reenter. Exclusion can be a big job, especially if there are many cracks. For structurally sound houses with only a few entry points, it's a pretty simple process.

Bats migrate to hibernate in mines or deep caves in winter, so late fall is a great time to seal up all exterior entry points and clean out droppings. To begin, determine where bats get in. Examine the building exterior in daylight to see any cracks or holes, then watch for bat activity or greasy brown marks (a mix of bat urine, feces, and body oils) in those spots on a warm, clear evening. Watch each side of the house, since bats often use multiple entry points.

Easily make exclusionary devices of nylon window screen with a mesh of 1/6" or smaller or nylon netting placed over a bat entry point . Cover wholes and seal along the top and 3/4 down the sides with duct tape or staples. Allow netting to hang a bit loosely and extend about 2' below the bat access point to act as a one-way door. Bats crawl down and out the bottom to fly away, but when they return to the opening and can't figure out how to get back in.

Or cover the openings with cleaned-out caulking tubes, ends cut off and pointed downwards. Bats drop down and out through tubes, but can't climb back up the smooth surface. Excluders must be left in place over each bat entry for at least a week, making bats give up trying to get back in and move to a new home.

Since bats can smell a prior roosting spot for miles, remove all droppings carefully. Bat manure (guano) may be an excellent fertilizer, but may have a fungus that causes respiratory infection, so use a mask and HEPA filter vacuum. Spray with com-mercial odor eliminator and antibacterial.

By Jodi Liss, for Old House Journal

Snug as a Bug: 7 Weatherization Reminders

1. Seal window and door exteriors. Caulk around frames and trim at shingle/clapboard edges to seal gaps. (It helps the paint job too.) Use polyurethane or silicone caulk where different materials meet (wood and stone). Do not caulk undersides of windows or doors, or where clapboards lap: these are moisture vapor exits. On surfaces to be painted, use acrylic-latex.

2. Point up foundations. Old houses may have stone, brick, or concrete block foundations that settled or shrunken wood sills, making sill-line gaps. Trowel them closed with mortar first.

3. Inspect door weatherstrips. On exterior door surface-mount weatherstrips (rubber bulb jamb seals or floor sweeps), check for drafts with a lit incense stick, then adjust if needed. Repair integral spring-metal weatherstrips with bent or missing parts.

4. Check fireplace damper. Most post-1900 fireplaces have dampers over the firebox that close the flue to limit heat loss when idle. Check the damper isn't marred by age or stuck open/shut by fallen debris. Call a chimney sweep for big problems.

5. Insulate unheated crawlspaces. Put batt insulation between upper floor joists; staple wire mesh or rabbit fencing to secure. Install vapor retarder/foil facing towards living space. Make air space between vapor retarder and subfloor; block ends to keep air space dry. Lay medium-weight polyethylene sheeting over ground to limit moisture migration and tape joints.

6. Check storm windows and sashes. Storm windows protect windows from winter rain/snow plus slow heat loss with dead-air space if they are tight enough to limit air movement. Ensure storms fit snugly around window frames, leaving only a small weep hole to allow moisture to escape. Ineffective loose storms promote frost on inner window surfaces. Sashes should also be tight to prevent frost on storm windows.

7. Seal all attic penetrations. Pipes, vents, hatches, recessed lights, and cracks that penetrate the second-floor ceiling allow for heat loss and let moisture vapor into the attic, where cooler temperatures makes it condense into water that saturates insulation or frosts. Close large penetrations with plywood or wallboard, then seal all joints and cracks with clear caulk.

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What Style is Your House?

Bungalow (1905-1930)

The term “bungalow” originated in India, deriving from *baṅgalo* or *baṅglā*, meaning “Bengali,” meaning a "house in the Bengal style". Such houses were traditionally small, detached one-story structures with a wide veranda. “Bungalow” appears in English about 1696, describing “bungales” or “hovels” in India used by English sailors of the East India Company. Later it referred to spacious homes or lodgings of British Raj officials, with high status and exotic connotations. In the late 19th century, it was the term for large country or suburban houses built in an Arts and Crafts or other Western vernacular style (essentially large cottages).

The bungalow of today, in Britain and North America, is a residential house, normally detached, which is either single story or has a second story built into a sloping roof, usually with dormer windows (“one and a half stories”). Full vertical walls are therefore only seen on one story, at least on the front and rear elevations. Usually the houses are relatively small, especially from recent decades, though early examples may be large, in which case the term bungalow tends not to be used today. The space-efficient floor plan of bungalow houses may have also been inspired by army tents and rural English cottages. The idea was to cluster the kitchen, dining area, bedrooms, and bathroom around a central living area.

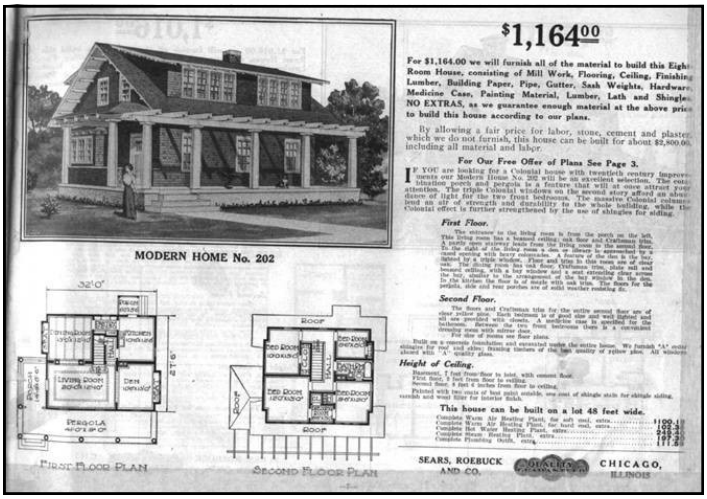
The first American house to be called a bungalow was designed in 1879 by William Gibbons Preston. Built at Monument Beach on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, the two-story house had the informal air of resort architecture. However, this house was much larger and more elaborate than the homes we think of when we use the term *Bungalow*.

Two California architects, Charles Sumner Greene and Henry Mather Greene, are often credited with inspiring America to build Bungalows. Their most famous project was the huge Craftsman style Gamble house (1909) in Pasadena, California. However, the Green brothers also published more modest Bungalow plans in many magazines and pattern books.

The bungalow style was popular in the western United States. Simpler than the Victorians that preceded them, bungalows are typically parked in neat rows in city neighborhoods as low cost, simple living quarters with an artistic touch to many Americans getting by on modest means. With special features of style, simplicity, convenience, sound construction, and excellent plumbing, the bungalow filled more than the need for shelter; It provided fulfillment of the American dream.

A number of features identify bungalow. Typically, they have one or more low-pitched overhanging gables on a 1 or 1½ story structure. The overall architecture has a low profile with prominent horizontal accents. Exposed beams and projecting brackets emphasize the structural form and give a “craftsman” look. Natural materials like wooden shingles and clapboards, cobblestones, and rough-faced brick are used for exterior walls, porch columns, and chimneys. Porches extend across the width of the house, supported by stocky or battered columns. Windows are frequently either casement or double hung with many smaller panes combined with a larger, single pane.

There are several variations of bungalows, classified as California (at right), Arts and Crafts, Cape Cod, Chicago, Mission, Prairie, Pueblo, Tudor, and Moderne. Newer homes with bungalow traits are often dubbed “bungaloids.”



“What Style is Your House?” was a regular feature of early HPC Newsletters; some information in these articles may have already been published or compiled from other sources like Old House Journal online, Wikipedia, and about.com as well as from our recent Historic Resources Survey of the Jacksonville Historic.