



WEYMOUTH HOUSE, BISHOPSTOKE, HAMPSHIRE

BAT SURVEY REPORT AND MITIGATION STRATEGY

Final Report V1.1

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Executive Summary

This report has been prepared by CC Ecology Ltd on behalf of Mr and Mrs Adcock who intend on submitting a planning application for the refurbishment of their property Weymouth House, Bishopstoke, Hampshire. The proposals for the Site will include a single storey rear extension, internal renovations and alterations to the exterior of the house, to include the removal of the existing hanging tiles.

This report includes the ecological information on Weymouth House gathered by CC Ecology Ltd, an assessment of the likely impacts of the proposals, and a mitigation strategy.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the Site, including an internal and external daytime inspection of the house for bat roost potential, was undertaken by Claire Clarke of CC Ecology Ltd on 12th May 2022.

The PEA and daytime inspection of the house for bats recorded a low to moderate number of potential bat roosting opportunities and/or access points during the external inspection. These were under roof and hanging tiles. Two further Phase 2 bat surveys were originally recommended in line with Best Practice Guidelines for assessing a structure with moderate bat roost suitability.

The initial dusk survey, carried out in June 2022, recorded no bat emergences or entries. The pre-dawn survey carried out in July 2022 recorded one Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* bat entering under hanging tiles on the rear elevation and following this a further Phase 2 bat survey was recommended to fully assess the roost in line with best practice guidelines. The final dusk survey, carried out in September 2022, recorded one Pipistrelle sp. considered most likely to be a Soprano Pipistrelle emerging from under hanging tiles in the same location.

A mitigation strategy has been designed that takes into account the assessment of the site for bats and will ensure that the impacts on bats are mitigated. The mitigation strategy includes the careful timing, phasing, and supervision of works to potential bat roosting areas.

A European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) in respect of bats will be required to undertake the extension at Weymouth House as a small day roost for Soprano Pipistrelle bats that is located under hanging tiles, will be removed, and therefore the roost will be destroyed.

The house also has potential to support nesting birds and therefore recommendations for conducting the work sensitively and in compliance with the relevant legislation are made within the report.

No further impacts on protected species are anticipated. Further recommendations are made to include enhancements for biodiversity in line with local and national planning policy.

1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 CC Ecology was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Adcock to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) on their property, known as Weymouth House. A PRA is an initial stage survey focused on assessing a structure for bat roost potential. A PEA assesses a site for its potential to support protected species and habitats, as well as assessing whether any other ecological constraints may be applicable to the project.
- 1.2 A PRA/PEA identified the potential for bats to use the house in areas that will be impacted upon by the proposals. Two further Phase 2 surveys for bats were recommended and confirmed the presence of a small day roost for Soprano Pipistrelle and therefore a third Phase 2 survey was carried out to ensure a full assessment of the Site for bats in line with Best Practice Guidelines (BCT, 2016).
- 1.3 Measures to avoid or mitigate impacts on protected species or to compensate for loss of habitats are provided within this report. It is considered that if the mitigation strategies outlined within this report are followed that there are unlikely to be any residual impacts on ecological features as a result of the proposals.

Development Proposals

- 1.4 The proposals for the Site include renovations to the house including the construction of a single storey extension to the rear of the property, internal alterations as well as external changes to include the removal of the existing slate hanging tiles. Refer to **Map 1** for the Site Proposals.

Site Context

- 1.5 The Site, known as Weymouth House, is situated in a suburban setting in the town of Bishopstoke at Ordnance Survey grid reference SU 4695 2029. The Site is relatively close to the northern edge of Bishopstoke with open countryside approximately 200m to the north, east and west and the more built-up areas of Bishopstoke stretching to the south. Bishopstoke is a large village that is well connected to Eastleigh.
- 1.6 The immediate surrounding habitats comprise of residential gardens, including both the garden of Weymouth House itself and those of surrounding residential properties within an area of moderate density housing.
- 1.7 The closest Statutory Protected Wildlife Site is the River Itchen Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which is located approximately 300m to the northwest of the Site. The river and Priority Action Plan Habitats within the SSSI

dominate the landscape to the north and west of the site. The priority habitats are a mosaic of Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh, Reedbeds, Good Quality Semi-Improved Grassland, Deciduous Woodland, Lowland Fens and Lowland Meadows. The open country to the north and east of the site is mainly composed of a mosaic of arable and pasture fields bisected by hedgerows, interspersed with patches of deciduous woodland, some of which is Ancient Woodland. Bishopstoke itself has many small patches of ancient deciduous woodland.

- 1.8 The South Downs National park is situated c. 1.6km north of the site, Hocombe Mead Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is c. 4.1km north west of the site, Valley Park Woodlands LNR is c. 4.7km west of the site, and Trodds Copse Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located approximately 5 km to the northwest of the Site. The Site is located within the impact risk zone for the River Itchen SSSI although this excludes householder applications and those that don't extend outside of existing settlements.

Relevant Legislation and Policy Implications

Relevant Legislation

- 1.9 The key legislative provisions of relevance to this report with respect to the development proposals and their potential effects on ecological features are listed below, with further detail provided in **Appendix 1**.

- The Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- The Badgers Act 1992

Biodiversity Action Plans

- 1.10 The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was the Government's response to the 1992 Convention on Biodiversity (The Rio Convention), with the aim of halting the loss of biodiversity in the UK. The new UK post-2010 Biodiversity Framework replaces the previous UK Biodiversity Action Plan and is the government's response to the new strategic plan on the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Although the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework supersedes the UK BAP, the UK BAP lists of priority species and habitats still remain an important reference source for identifying habitats and species of principal importance within England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Within England

Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 list species and habitats of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity.

Planning Implications

- 1.10 The Government has set out its policies for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in the planning system in the revised *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2018)* which states that plan policies and planning decisions should aim to maintain, and enhance, restore or add to biodiversity and geological conservation interests'. The key principles of the NPPF describe the importance of avoiding, mitigating, and compensating for adverse effects.
- 1.11 Weymouth House is situated within the Eastleigh Planning Authority area. Currently local planning policies of relevance to this area are policies listed within the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 which was adopted on 25th April 2022. Policies within this that are of relevance to biodiversity include:

Policy DM11, Nature conservation

General Approach

1. The Council will work with statutory and voluntary agencies and developers, and will determine planning applications, to:

a. protect, conserve and enhance all:

i. international, national and local nature conservation designations; and

ii. networks of natural habitats and features, including the Local Ecological Network, Priority Biodiversity Areas and Priority Biodiversity Links, watercourses, wetland complexes, woodland trees, and trees and hedgerows important to biodiversity and local character; and facilitate their adaptation to climate change wherever possible;

b. assist in achieving national, county and local biodiversity targets as set out in Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs);

c. seek a net gain of biodiversity on all development sites (including sites for redevelopment) through the protection, enhancement and connection of existing and provision of new habitats and features of nature conservation interest compatible with the native biodiversity characteristics of the Borough, having regard to local geodiversity and soils; and

d. contribute to major elements of the PfSH Green Infrastructure Strategy and other strategies for the provision and enhancement of multifunctional green infrastructure including green routes, ecological networks and biodiversity enhancements (see strategic policy S9).

International Designations

2. Development which is likely (either individually or in combination with other developments) to adversely affect the integrity of an international or European nature conservation site will not be permitted subject only to imperative reasons of overriding public interest and securing any necessary compensatory measures in the absence of alternative solutions. A 'project level' Habitat Regulations Assessment will be required where there are likely significant effects or uncertainty. Any mitigation measures required to ensure no adverse impact must be implemented at the appropriate time.

3. The Council will work with PfSH, Natural England, the Environment Agency and other wildlife organisations to develop and implement with developers a strategic approach to the protection and enhancement of international and European sites from the direct and indirect effects of development. Within Eastleigh Borough this will include:

a. implementing:

i. the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy (requiring contributions from residential developments within 5.6 kilometres of the Solent Special Protection Area to the Strategy); and

ii. the interim and any future New Forest Recreation Mitigation Strategy if required; or alternative agreed site specific measures to address recreational disturbance;

b. preserving the water quality and flows within the Itchen and Hamble, Southampton Water and Solent;

c. protecting the River Itchen SAC, in particular the maintenance and where appropriate restoration of habitats and qualifying species to favourable conservation status (as defined by article 1 of the Habitats Directive); and

d. seek contributions towards measures set out in the Southern Damselfly Conservation Strategy (or other strategy) specifically to deliver biodiversity net gain.

National and Local Designations

4. Development will not be permitted if it is likely (either individually or in combination with other developments) to have a direct or indirect adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) or Local Nature Reserve (LNR) as shown on the policies map (or on a more recent plan provided by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre) unless it can be demonstrated that:

- a. there are no alternative solutions;*
- b. the adverse effects are unavoidable;*
- c. measures are taken to mitigate or, as a last resort, compensate for the adverse effects;*
- d. there is an overall biodiversity net gain; and*
- e. if there are any residual adverse effects which cannot be avoided, mitigated or compensated, the benefits of the development must clearly outweigh the adverse effects on the nature conservation value of the site and any broader impacts on national and local designations. Priority habitats, protected and priority species and the local ecological network*

5. Development will not be permitted if it is likely (either individually or in combination with other developments) to have a direct or indirect adverse effect on priority habitats, protected or priority species, or on the local ecological network unless it can be demonstrated that:

- a. there are no alternative solutions;*
- b. the adverse effects are unavoidable;*
- c. measures are taken to mitigate or, as a last resort, compensate for the adverse effects;*
- d. there is an overall biodiversity net gain; and*
- e. if there are any residual adverse effects, the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the adverse effects on priority habitats, priority and protected species, and the local ecological network.*

Irreplaceable habitats

6. Development will not be permitted if it results in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees), unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

Buffers

7. Buffers free from development will be provided to designated sites to avoid/mitigate impacts, including recreational impact and impacts on edge habitats, and to maintain dark skies.

Surveys

8. Development will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that:

a. there have been thorough habitat and species surveys;

b. the great crested newt strategic survey and strategy have been considered in all developments within 500m of a great crested newt pond; and

c. the strategic bat trapping survey has been considered in all developments within the locality of a woodland or connected habitat networks.

2. Methodology

Introduction

- 2.1 Methodology for the evaluation of the Site and assessment of the potential impacts has been based on the Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) in the United Kingdom published by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2018). Methodology for the undertaking of targeted protected species surveys have been based upon Best Practice Guidelines for each species/species group and these have also been used to evaluate relevant features in combination with the CIEEM guidelines.

Defining the Zone of Influence

- 2.2 To define the spatial scope of the ecological surveys at Weymouth House it is necessary to predict the likely zone of influence of the development proposals for. The zone of influence of a project is defined by CIEEM's EcIA guidelines as *'...the area over which ecological features may be affected by biophysical changes as a result of the proposed project and associated activities. This is likely to extend beyond the project site.....'*
- 2.3 The types of activities that might occur because of the development at Weymouth House and the likely biophysical changes (in the absence of mitigation) include:
- a. Renovation of the existing property, including the removal of hanging tiles, with potential impacts on roosting bats and nesting birds if present during works; and
 - b. Increase of noise, dust, and lighting during the construction phase.

Desktop Study

- 2.4 A desktop study was undertaken to obtain information regarding protected species on the site and within the zone of influence. This involved searching the National Biodiversity Network website, assessing the known distribution of bats in Britain (Richardson, 2001), as well as interrogating Natural England's "Nature on the Map" (MAGIC) to establish protected sites and habitats within the zone of influence of the proposals.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

- 2.5 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) Survey of the Site was undertaken on 12th May 2022 by Claire Clarke of CC Ecology Ltd. The survey is essentially an ecological appraisal of the site. The habitats and features within the site boundary were mapped and classified, in addition any evidence of or potential for protected species to be on the site or within the zone of influence was noted.

Bats

Overview

- 2.6 The bat surveys comprised a combination of an assessment of habitats within the zone of influence for bats during the PEA survey which included a daytime inspection of external and internal areas of the house (Preliminary Roost Assessment/PRA) and carrying out of targeted Phase 2 bat surveys.

Daytime Inspection of Buildings within the Site Boundary

- 2.7 A daytime inspection for bats was carried out on the house (internal and external) on 12th May 2022 by Claire Clarke (a licensed bat ecologist). The building was searched for evidence that bats may be using, or previously have used, the building for roosting. Such evidence may include:

- The presence of bats;
- Bat droppings within the building or on external surfaces on and/or immediately adjacent to the building; and
- Staining or scratch marks around suitable bat roost locations or suitable access points into the building.

- 2.8 All accessible loft voids within the sections of the building to be impacted upon were searched using a very bright torch. The external inspection of the building involved searching for evidence with the use of a torch and binoculars.

- 2.9 Bats may roost in locations that are inaccessible to a surveyor, such as in between the roof lining and tiles, gaps under hanging tiles, within soffits etc. Therefore, potential areas for bats to roost or potential access points were also noted during the survey in order to assess the buildings 'potential' to support roosting bats in line with Bat Conservation Trust best practice guidelines (Collins, 2016). An assessment of the buildings' potential value to bats was also made at the initial inspection stage to determine the level of any further survey work required to fully assess the site for bats.

Phase 2 Bat Surveys

- 2.10 As the property was found to have high potential to support roosting bats, three further Phase 2 bat surveys were recommended to assess the presence or likely absence of bat roosts, in compliance with best practice guidelines.
- 2.11 Two surveyors in total (for each survey) were positioned either side of the section to be impacted upon, at locations identified as allowing good sight lines and ensuring that all potential bat access/egress points were visible between the surveyors. Each surveyor was equipped with either Echometer Touch 2 Pro & Amazon Fire or Anabat Walkabout or

Petterson D240x and an Edirol recorder or Batbox Duet and Roland RO9 recorder (as appropriate) to record unidentified calls for subsequent computer analysis.

2.12 Each surveyor was supplied with a plan of the site on which to mark bat activity. The following information was recorded for any bats seen or heard:

- Species;
- Time;
- Behaviour (whether it was feeding, commuting, social calling or swarming);
- If seen, direction of flight; and
- If it emerged or re-entered the building.

2.13 Behaviour was identified by flight patterns and call characteristics as heard on the bat detector. Weather conditions (temperature, wind speed/direction, cloud cover, rainfall in the last hour) were also recorded at the start and end of each survey.

Bat Survey Timings

2.14 The timings and weather conditions for the surveys carried out are included within Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 Timings and weather conditions of each of the bat surveys undertaken at Weymouth House

Date	Type	Personnel	Start	End	Sunset/ Sunrise	Weather
05/06/2022	Dusk Emergence	Matthew Clarke Gareth Knass	20:55	22:45	21:14	14-12°C, Wind BF1, Cloud 100%, Dry
04/07/2022	Pre-Dawn Entry	Matt Clarke Gareth Knass	03:25	05:05	04:57	11°C, Dry, BF 0, Cloud 5%
13/09/2022	Dusk Emergence	Matt Clarke Ross Brown	19:10	20:55	19:25	17°C, light showers, BF 1, Cloud 5%

Reptiles

2.15 During the PEA survey, habitats within the site boundary were assessed for their potential to support reptiles. Any habitats considered suitable were mapped. In addition, the surrounding landscape and adjoining habitats were appraised for their potential to support reptiles in order to ascertain the likelihood of reptiles being present.

Dormice

- 2.16 Habitats within and adjacent to the Site boundary were considered for their potential to support dormice. The species of any boundary and woody habitats were noted and the composition of species, as well as links to other patches of suitable habitat in the surrounding area was considered. During the desktop study, aerial maps were referred to assess how well linked any suitable habitats on the site are to surrounding habitats in the wider landscape.

Amphibians

- 2.17 During the PEA survey the site was searched for any ponds. Ordnance survey maps and aerial photos were assessed for the presence of ponds within 500m of the boundary. The terrestrial habitats within and adjacent to the site boundary were assessed for their suitability for amphibian species and habitats were mapped and described during PEA survey.

Badgers

- 2.18 The Site and its environs were searched for any evidence of badger activity as well as setts. Any signs were mapped, and any holes were classified according to their use.

Survey Constraints

- 2.19 Bats will often roost in places that are inaccessible to the surveyor, such as under tiles and within soffits. During the inspection due regard was paid to the noting of features that have the potential to support crevice dwelling species.
- 2.20 Bats are nomadic and invariably move between roost sites, therefore any bat survey will only provide a snapshot of how bats are using a particular site at that time.
- 2.21 During the final dusk emergence survey in September 2022 there were some very light rain showers. These didn't affect bat activity levels which were not dissimilar from previous surveys and therefore the rain is not considered a constraint.

3. Survey results and evaluation

Designated Sites

- 3.1 The closest Statutory Protected Wildlife Site is the River Itchen Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which is located approximately 300m to the northwest of the Site. The river and Priority Action Plan Habitats within the SSSI dominate the landscape to the north and west of the site. The River Itchen is designated as an SAC due to it containing the Annex I habitat '*Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculus fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation*', as well as providing habitat for the following Annex II species: Southern Damselfly *Coenagrion mercuriale*; and Bullhead *Cottus gobio*. Other nearby designated sites include: The South Downs National park, situated c. 1.6km north of the site; Hocombe Mead Local Nature Reserve (LNR), c. 4.1km north west of the site; Valley Park Woodlands LNR, c. 4.7km west of the site; and Trodds Copse Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located approximately 5 km to the northwest of the Site.
- 1.7 The Site falls within the SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) for the nearby River Itchen SSSI. IRZs are used to identify risks to protected sites such as SSSIs, SPAs, and SACs resulting from development. Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are asked to consult Natural England on developments that are located within the Impact Risk Zones that fall within certain categories. The Defra Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) Map website (<http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>) provides further advice and states that:
- 'The Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) are a GIS tool developed by Natural England to make a rapid initial assessment of the potential risks posed by development proposals to: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites. They define zones around each site which reflect the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified and indicate the types of development proposal which could potentially have adverse impacts.'* Whilst within the IRZ for the statutory protected sites described above, it is not necessary for Natural England to be consulted for householder applications.

Site Overview: Broad Habitats and Features

- 3.2 Refer to **Map 2** which shows existing site layout.
- 3.3 The Site includes the property, Weymouth House, which has front and rear gardens. There is a garage/outbuilding in the rear garden which is connected to the road by a block paved driveway leading down the west side of the house. A detailed description of the house is included within the bat survey section below. The garage is subject to a separate planning

application, and details of this structure are included within a separate report (CC Ecology, 04/11/2022).

- 3.4 The front garden is mostly laid to lawn with a few flower borders and is bordered on three sides by an ornamental hedge. The garden to the rear is also laid to lawn and contains mature trees, ornamental shrubs and flower borders. Immediately to the rear of the house is a small patio.

Bat Surveys

Pre-existing Records

- 3.5 Local bat records including those of Richardson (2000) occurring within a 100 km area show Greater Horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, Lesser Horseshoe bat *R. Hipposideros*, Whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus*, Brandt's bat *Myotis brandtii*, Natterer's bat *M. nattereri*, Bechstein's bat *M. bechsteinii*, Daubenton's bat *M. daubentonii*, Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus*, Soprano Pipistrelle *P. pygmaeus*, Brown Long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, Grey long-eared bat *P. austriacus*, Serotine bat, Noctule bat, Leisler's bat *N. leisleri* and Barbastelle bat *Barbastella barbastellus*. Of these species, only the two Pipistrelle species and Brown long-eared bats can be considered as being at all common. The other species range from local too rare.
- 3.6 Magic Map provides records of European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) in respect of bats scattered in the surrounding area. A small number of EPSL's have been granted within Bishopstoke close to Weymouth House. Species present include Common *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, and Brown Long-eared *Plecotus auritus* with impacts mainly for the damage or destruction of resting places.

Ground Level Tree Inspection

- 3.7 A ground level tree inspection for bats was undertaken at the same time as the PEA. No trees with bat roost potential are located within the zone of influence of the proposals.

Daytime Inspection of Buildings

- 3.8 A daytime inspection of the house was undertaken during the PEA survey on 12th May 2022.
- 3.9 The house is characteristic of construction during the 1830's. It is a large, detached, brick-built, two-storey building, which clad on three sides with slate hanging tiles. The property has a square hipped main roof which is clad with plain concrete tiles and a central flat section of roof, typical of a Mansard roof construction. The house has brick eaves. On the east side is a single storey lean-to with a single-pitched, slate-tiled roof.
- 3.10 The slate hanging tiles located on the sides and rear of the building are constructed with large slate tiles and little to no overlapping, many of the tiles are fixed tight to the external

wall and therefore there is little in the way of gaps underneath many of them. A small number of tiles are broken and are slightly lifted providing a single crevice feature that is suitable for roosting bats.

3.11 The external inspection of Weymouth House identified a small number of potential roosting opportunities and access/egress points for roosting bats including:

- A small number of gaps under lifted roof tiles; and
- Gaps under lifted and missing hanging tiles.

3.12 Internally there is a single loft void in the same footprint as the main roof. This is 1.5m high, is heavily trussed, and is lined with black bitumen felt. There is deep fibreglass and vermiculite insulation laid at joist level. A large hot water tank is situated in the centre of the loft. There was a large amount of dust and debris due to roof damage during a recent storm. There was some light ingress and tears in the felt. Due to the presence of the water tank and trussing the loft was difficult to navigate and was therefore mainly viewed from the hatch.

3.13 No evidence of bats was noted within the loft space or on the exterior of the property.

Phase 2 Bat Surveys

3.14 The dusk and dawn survey undertaken at Weymouth House are summarised in **Table 3.1** below.

Table 3.1: Summarised results of the bat activity surveys

Survey Date	Bat Emergences/re-entries and further evidence	General Activity
5 th June 2022 DUSK	No emergences	Species: Common Pipistrelle, Pipistrelle sp., Long-eared bat sp., and Noctule. Occasional bat activity with short periods of foraging around the house and garden by a single Common Pipistrelle.
4 th July 2022 DAWN	1 Soprano Pipistrelle entered under hanging tiles on the rear elevation	Species: Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle Regular Common Pipistrelle foraging passes throughout the survey. Possible larger Common Pipistrelle Roost located under hanging tiles on neighbouring property (a couple of doors away).
13/09/2022 DUSK	1 Pipistrelle sp. emerged from under hanging tiles on the rear elevation	Species: Common Pipistrelle, Pipistrelle sp. 1-2 Common Pipistrelle bats foraging and social calling around the house between 19:43 and end of the survey.

Bat survey interpretation and evaluation of results

- 3.15 The house is confirmed as supporting one species of bat, Soprano Pipistrelle.
- 3.16 The bat roost located under hanging tiles on the rear elevation was confirmed during the pre-dawn survey and second dusk survey where a single bat was recorded entering and emerging from the roost respectively. Recordings of the bat calling were made during the pre-dawn survey and identified the entering bat during the July dawn survey as Soprano Pipistrelle. The second dusk survey recorded the emerging bat as silent although the timing of emergence shape and size of the bat emerging was characteristic of Pipistrelle sp. It is considered most likely that this was also a Soprano Pipistrelle.
- 3.17 These results provide evidence for assessing the population size class. Based on this evidence it is considered that house supports a small day roost for Soprano Pipistrelle bats under hanging tiles, in use on an regular basis.
- 3.18 Based on the results of the surveys so far it is considered that the site is of less than local value for bats.

Reptiles

- 3.19 During the PEA survey the habitats were assessed for their potential to support reptiles. No habitats within the construction zone have the potential to support reptiles.

Amphibians

- 3.20 The assessment of the Site for amphibian species the habitats within the zone of influence of the proposals are considered generally unsuitable for terrestrial amphibians and therefore no further surveys for this species group are required.

Hazel dormouse

- 3.21 None of the habitats within the construction zone are considered suitable for Dormice.

Nesting Birds

- 3.22 Features on the house have the potential to support nesting birds.

Other Protected and Notable Species

- 3.29 No Badger setts were noted during the survey. The site may support other species such as Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*, which is also of conservation priority listed under Section 41 of the NERC act.

4. Potential impacts in the absence of mitigation

Introduction

- 4.1 This section details the potential ecological impacts of the proposal in the absence of mitigation. The potential activities are identified with reference to the scheme, as identified in **Section 1**. Recommended mitigation and enhancements to ensure that the favourable conservation status of species is maintained, in compliance with the relevant legislation and planning policy, is detailed in **Section 5**.

Impacts to Sites and Habitats

- 4.2 Given the small scale of the proposed development no impacts to designated nature conservation sites are anticipated.
- 4.3 None of the habitats within the zone of influence of the proposed development are considered to be of intrinsic value apart from their potential to support protected species.

Impacts on Fauna

- 4.4 The renovation proposals at Weymouth House include the removal of the slate hanging tiles, under which a Soprano Pipistrelle bat day roost is located. These works have the potential to disturb, injure or kill bats if present.
- 4.5 The proposals will destroy a small day roost for Soprano Pipistrelle bats. Damage or destruction of a roost and disturbance of bats would result in a breach of the Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.
- 4.6 The house has potential to support nesting birds. All proposed works to the house could result in the disturbance of nesting birds and destruction of nests if undertaken during the bird nesting season, this would be contrary to Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 4.7 Overall impacts on biodiversity may arise from any increase of lighting in the construction and operational phases of the development and changes to on-site structure.

5. Recommendations: Opportunities for mitigation and enhancement

Introduction

- 5.1 For the proposals to comply fully with applicable legislation and planning policy, it is necessary to mitigate or compensate for the ecological impacts as identified in **Section 4**. The NPPF also places an onus on developments to provide ecological enhancements and to meet local biodiversity objectives wherever possible. Within this section mitigation measures are recommended to ensure that sensitive habitats and protected species are considered during the construction and operation phases of the development, in compliance with applicable legislation and planning policy.

Mitigation and compensation measures

Bats

- 5.2 All species of bat and their roosts are protected under the Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The Phase 2 surveys confirmed that the hanging tiles proposed for removal contain day roosts for small numbers of Common and Soprano Pipistrelle bats.
- 5.2.1 As a roost site for bats will be destroyed during the works a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) will need to be granted prior to the commencement of any work affecting bat roosts.
- 5.3 Prior to the start of works temporary roosting opportunities in the form of a woodcrete bat box suitable for a variety of species, will be installed on a mature tree within the rear garden to provide alternative roosting opportunities for bats whilst the work is being carried out.
- 5.4 The destructive works will be timed accordingly to avoid the sensitive times of year. No destructive works to the house will be carried out during the hibernation season, which is generally considered to be from 1 November to mid/end March (although this is dictated by weather conditions).
- 5.5 Destructive works to the house such as the removal of tiles will be undertaken under the supervision of a licensed bat ecologist. All sensitive areas of the building such as hanging tiles will be hand stripped, following a detailed toolbox talk to all site personnel. If any bats are found during the destructive works, they will be caught by hand by a licensed bat ecologist and transferred to the installed bat box within the Site boundary.
- 5.6 Compensatory bat roost features for the Soprano Pipistrelle day roost will be installed into the renovated building. Two interlocking bat tubes will be installed within the wall of the renovated building, the location will be on the same aspect but closer to the eaves and corner

of the property to ensure a good drop zone for roosting bats existing the features and closer to boundary vegetation as well as away from potential light spill from windows.

- 5.7 The bat box in the garden will be retained post development as an enhancement to the site for biodiversity.
- 5.8 Refer to **Map 1** for the proposed mitigation strategy.
- 5.9 Any new lighting proposed will comply with Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and Artificial Lighting. New external lighting will be of low level, directional, on a PIR system with a 30 second cut off, of a low lumen output, lack UV elements and will be of a warm white (2700 Kelvin). No external lighting will shine on sensitive ecological features such as the boundaries of the Site.

General Considerations

- 5.10 The house has potential to support nesting birds. Destructive works on areas of the building with bird nesting potential should be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season or under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist following an early morning bird survey.

Enhancements

- 5.11 In addition to the mitigation recommended for bats as described above, areas of retained habitat as well as the creation of habitats can have benefits for biodiversity, in line with national and local planning policy.
- 5.12 Efforts to enhance the garden for biodiversity are already being implemented by the owners of Weymouth House and include the installation of a pond with rough margins and native riparian and aquatic vegetation as well as unmown areas of the lawn at the rear of the property.
- 5.13 Further enhancements may include:
- The planting of native, fruiting shrub species; and
 - Installation of integrated bird boxes in buildings or external boxes on the building, particularly swift boxes and house sparrow terraces under the eaves of the house.

Residual Impacts

- 5.14 Provided the mitigation recommended above is implemented in full, there should be no residual impacts to protected species and habitats because of the renovation proposals at Weymouth House.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

- 6.1 A daytime inspection for bats has been undertaken at Weymouth House and this was followed up with three Phase 2 bat surveys during the active bat season.
- 6.2 Within the construction zone of the proposals no habitats of any intrinsic nature conservation value were noted. However, habitats within the Site boundary have been found to, or have the potential to, support protected species.
- 6.3 The bat surveys on Weymouth have confirmed that the sections of the building to be impacted upon by the proposed works support a small day roost for Soprano Pipistrelle bats.
- 6.4 In order for works to be carried out on the building legally it will be necessary to obtain a European Protected Species Licence following the granting of planning permission and before any work to bat roost locations takes place.
- 6.5 Recommendations for mitigation and enhancement have been made and are listed below.

Recommendations

- 6.6 Mitigation and enhancement recommendations include:
 - Destructive works to the house outside of the nesting bird season or if this is not possible following an early morning bird survey and under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist;
 - Implementation of a bat mitigation strategy including the replacement of bat roosting opportunities.
 - The installation of bird nest boxes at suitable locations on site; and
 - The planting of native fruiting shrub species
- 6.7 Provided the mitigation measures recommended above implemented in full, there should be no residual impacts to ecological features because of this development.

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Appendix 1

Relevant Legislation

CONSERVATION OF HABITATS AND SPECIES REGULATIONS 2017

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the Habitats Regulations) transpose Habitats Directive into UK legislation. The Habitats Regulations provide for the designation and protection of European Sites and European Protected Species. European Sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), which form part of the Natura 2000 network of protected areas across Europe.

European Protected Species (EPS) are those listed under Schedule 2 of the Habitats Regulations and include dormouse, great crested newt, otter, and all species of bat. The regulations prohibit the deliberate capture, killing or disturbance of any EPS; it is also an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any of these species. In order to carry out a lawful operation (e.g. development work which has full planning permission) that may result in an offence under the Habitats Regulations, it is necessary to obtain a licence from Natural England. EPS Licences will only be granted after Natural England has been satisfied that there are no satisfactory alternative and that there will not be any adverse impacts on the favourable conservation status of the species.

WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is the principle piece of legislative protection of wildlife in Great Britain. Various amendments have occurred since the original enactment. The Wildlife and Countryside Act contains both habitat and species protection. Certain bird, animal and plant species are afforded protection under Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the Act. Measures for the protection of the countryside, National Parks, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are also included within the Act.

COUNTRYSIDE AND RIGHTS OF WAY ACT 2000

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 adds to the protection afforded in the WCA to SSSI's and other important sites for nature conservation. In addition, under the Act it became a criminal offence to "recklessly disturb" Schedule 1 nesting birds and species protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. It also enabled heavier penalties on the conviction of wildlife offences.

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL COMMUNITIES ACT 2006

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 improved wildlife protection by amending the WCA. The main function of the NERC Act was to raise the profile of biodiversity amongst public authorities. Section 40 (S40) of the Act places a 'Biodiversity Duty' on all public bodies to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their normal functions.

PLANNING POLICY

NATIONAL LEVEL - THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF, 2018)

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (2018) (available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779764/NPPF_Feb_2019_web.pdf) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. Section 15 of the NPPF provides guidance on conserving and

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enhancing the natural environment through the planning system. This guidance replaces *Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9) Biodiversity and Geological Conservation*. Section 15, Paragraph 170, of the NPPF specifies that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- 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);
- 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;
- maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
- minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- 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
- remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

In consideration of habitats and biodiversity, Paragraph 174 states plans should:

- 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 biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- 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.

Paragraph 175 states when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- 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;

- 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;
- 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 reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

GOVERNMENT CIRCULAR 06/05: BIODIVERSITY AND GEOLOGICAL CONSERVATION

The Government Circular 06/05 provides guidance on the application of the law relating to planning and nature conservation. It was originally produced to accompany PPS9, and although some of the information contained within it is now out of date, paragraphs 98 and 99 of the document remain relevant.

Paragraph 98 states that *“the presence of protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitats”*

Paragraph 99 states that *“it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted”*

MAP 1: PROPOSALS AND COMPENSATORY BAT ROOST FEATURES



MAP 2: BAT SURVEY SUMMARY



