

Ecology response amended for H/23/94798 20 SYCAMORE AVENUE, CHANDLER'S FORD, EASTLEIGH, SO53 5RH

Roof alterations to provide first floor habitable accommodation with front and rear velux windows, and alterations to fenestration

Claire Campbell-Best

9/5/23

I have reviewed the Preliminary Roost Assessment by Chase Ecology (April 2023). The building has been assessed as having low bat roost suitability due to gaps formed by raised roof tiles and lead flashing. I can see these gaps in the photo provided (image 2) and do not consider this to be *flimsy* evidence, it is in line with the best practice guidelines. Small crevice-dwelling bats such as pipistrelles can fit into a space the size of a small matchbox. There is additional information available in the Bats and Buildings Leaflet, available free to download on the Bat Conservation Trust website (www.bats.org.uk, bat roosts, roosts in buildings). One emergence survey is required during the active bat season (May through August) in line with best practice guidelines. These are explained in Appendix 3 on page 22 of the report.

Bats prefer to roost under tiles on southern elevations because they tend to be warmer than the northern elevations. The presence of the street light is not necessarily a deterrent, bats often forage on insects attracted to the street lights.

This survey is necessary because the presence of protected species is a material consideration and must be established before the application is determined in case additional mitigation or changes to the design are required.

Unfortunately, council ecologists do not have the capacity to make site visits to give a second opinion, however I originally requested the PRA (see below) due to the potential bat roost features that I could see on the photos. The ecologist commissioned by the applicant has a class 2 bat license and 5 years of experience, and I accept their assessment of this building. These roost features may only shelter crevice-dwelling bats but if they are bat roosts then they need to be protected.

The quoted cost of the emergence survey is around the industry average. A more local consultancy would have shorter travel time and mileage charges, but many consultants are quite booked up now that the survey season has started. We frequently find bats emerging or re-entering from similar without previous evidence. Bat droppings are quite crumbly and disintegrate when exposed to weather. As this is the beginning of the activity season, it is possible that any droppings from previous years would not be visible on the outside of the roof.

To summarise, one emergence/re-entry survey is required, and the results must be reported to the LPA before the application can be determined. If bats are seen to emerge or re-enter on that survey, then the building would be a confirmed roost and two additional surveys would be required for a protected species mitigation license from Natural England. The license can only be applied for after planning permission has been granted, but the surveys to support the license must be done in the same year as the license application.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist

6/4/23

There are numerous records of bats very close to this site. I have reviewed the site photos and can see quite a few potential bat roost features which would be impacted by these proposals. A preliminary bat roost assessment (PRA) is required.

Biodiversity enhancements are also required. The PRA report should also include the most appropriate enhancements for this site. There are also records of hedgehogs nearby, so enhancements could also include hedgehog habitat.

A bat box/brick and a swift box/brick may be appropriate for this building.

The Bat Conservation Trust recommends installing a bat brick/box at least 4 m above the ground, away from artificial light sources, sheltered from strong winds and exposed to the sun for part of the day, facing south, south-east or south-west. ([https://www.bats.org.uk > our-work > putting-up-your-box](https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/putting-up-your-box))

Swift nest boxes are best positioned under the eaves or on walls facing north, northeast or north-west out of direct sunlight, five metres above the ground, with clear adjacent airspace so swifts can access them in a high-speed direct flight.

(<https://www.swiftconservation.org/Nestboxes%26Attraction.htm>)

Additional information is available at:

<https://sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/discover/in-your-garden/article/31>, planting for bats

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/wildlife/plants-for-pollinators>

<https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/bat-boxes>

<https://www.hampshireswifts.co.uk/nesting>

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/how-you-can-help-birds/nestboxes/nestboxes-for-small-birds/>

<https://www.swift-conservation.org/OurLeaflets.htm>

<https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/help-hedgehogs/hedgehog-homes/>

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