



BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT

2 SHARON ROAD, WEST END, SOUTHAMPTON, SO30 3AS

FINAL REPORT

June 2023

Report conditions

<i>Report title</i>	Bat Roost Assessment – 2 Sharon Road, Southampton	
<i>Client</i>	Steven Bell	
<i>Report status</i>	Final	
<i>Survey date</i>	15 th December 2022 and May to June 2023	
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Executive Summary

- This bat roost assessment report has been prepared in order to support a planning application for the proposed extension to the dormer windows at 2 Sharon Road, Southampton.
- A preliminary roost assessment survey was undertaken on the 7th December 2022.
- The preliminary roost assessment confirmed the presence of moderate suitability roosting features on the house, including lifted roof tiles and gaps under the hanging tiles. No evidence was recorded within accessible internal areas.
- In order to confirm the presence/absence of further roosting bats, characterise bat roosts, assess the extent that they may be affected by the proposed works and develop a proportionate and appropriate mitigation strategy, further survey work in accordance with Natural England standing advice and the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition) was required for the house. The recommended survey effort for structures with moderate roost suitability is two presence/absence surveys.
- Two presence/absence surveys comprising dusk emergence surveys were undertaken during May and June 2023.
- No bats were recorded roosting on site during the surveys.
- As such, there is considered to be no reasonable likelihood that bats will be present and affected by the proposed works.
- No further survey work is required.
- Provided the recommendations set out in section 5 are followed, the planning authority can be confident that the development would accord with relevant planning policy, legislation and caselaw.

Contents

1. Introduction	4
1.1 Report purpose	4
1.2 Description of proposal	4
1.3 Report context	4
1.4 Survey area	4
1.5 Limitations	4
1.6 Relevant documents	4
2. Survey Methodology	5
2.1 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Methodology	5
2.1.1 Surveyor/s	5
2.1.2 Survey area	5
2.1.3 Survey date	5
2.1.4 Survey description	5
2.1.5 Survey equipment	5
2.1.6 Weather conditions	5
2.1.7 Assessment methodology	6
2.2 Emergence Survey Methodology	6
2.2.1 Surveyor/s	6
2.2.2 Survey area	6
2.2.3 Survey date	6
2.2.4 Survey description	7
2.2.5 Survey limitations	7
2.2.6 Survey equipment	7
2.2.7 Weather conditions	7
3. Survey results	7
3.1 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment	7
3.1.1 Building description relevant to bats and their roosts	7
3.1.2 Site grounds description relevant to bats	9
3.2 Emergence Surveys	9
3.2.1 Visit 1 - 6th May 2023 – Emergence Survey	9
3.2.2 Visit 2 – 6th June 2023 – Emergence Survey	9
3.3 Other protected species	9
4. Discussion and Assessment of Impacts	10
4.1 Bat roost assessment and potential impacts	10
4.2 Relevant legislation and policy	10
5. Recommendations	12
5.1 Requirement for further surveys	12
5.1.1 Bats	12
5.1.2 Breeding birds	12
5.2 Mitigation strategy	12
5.2.1 Bats	12
5.2.2 Breeding birds	13
5.3 Enhancements	13
6. Conclusion	13
7. References	14
Appendix 1 – Proposal plan	15

1. Introduction

1.1 Report purpose

This report presents the findings of the bat roost assessment undertaken of the house at 2 Sharon Road, Southampton (central grid reference: SU 46174 14707).

1.2 Description of proposal

The current proposal is for the extension of the existing dormers on the north-eastern and south-western roof faces of the house.

1.3 Report context

A planning application is being prepared for the proposed works to the house at 2 Sharon Road, Southampton. Phillips Ecology have been instructed by the Applicants to undertake an ecological assessment to support the application, which has been submitted to the Eastleigh Borough Council.

1.4 Survey area

The survey area comprised the existing house and its immediate surrounds.

1.5 Limitations

The south-eastern elevation of the house was not fully visible during the preliminary roost assessment due to its proximity to the property's boundaries. No other limitations were encountered during the course of the survey. Therefore, despite the aforementioned limitation, it is considered that a robust assessment of the buildings' suitability for bats was undertaken.

1.6 Relevant documents

The relevant proposal plan used to inform this assessment is presented in Appendix 1.

2. Survey Methodology

2.1 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Methodology

2.1.1 Surveyor/s

The survey was carried out by Katy Goddard and Connor Hill of Phillips Ecology.

2.1.2 Survey area

The survey area comprised the house and its immediate surrounds which will be modified by the proposed conversion. The survey area extended to all areas of the property that will be modified by the proposed works in such a way that bats or their roosts could be impacted (directly or indirectly). Therefore, the survey included the entirety of the structure.

2.1.3 Survey date

The survey was carried out during the daytime on the 7th December 2022.

2.1.4 Survey description

The survey did not depart from the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition) which states that "A preliminary roost inspection survey is a detailed inspection of the exterior and interior of a structure to look for features that bats could use for entry/exit and roosting and to search for signs of bats".

The external features of the structure which will be modified by the proposed works in such a way that bats or their roosts could be impacted (directly or indirectly) if present, were systematically inspected in detail to compile information on potential and actual bat access points and roosting places such as lifted or broken roof materials, loose brickwork and open eaves. This included a thorough search for evidence of bat activity such as bat droppings, urine splashes and fur staining.

The interior of the building was inspected in order to identify potential or actual access points and roosting places and to record any evidence of bat activity or bats themselves.

2.1.5 Survey equipment

Survey equipment comprised:

- High-powered torch
- Ladders
- Camera
- Binoculars

2.1.6 Weather conditions

Weather during the survey can be described as: dry, 10% cloud cover, light breeze and 5°C. The weather conditions did not hinder the ecologist's ability to carry out the survey effectively.

2.1.7 Assessment methodology

The suitability of the building for supporting bat roosts will be assessed against the guidelines within Table 1 which have been adapted from the BCT Good Practice Guidelines.

Table 1 Suitability assessment guidelines

Suitability	Description of Roosting Habitats
<i>Negligible</i>	Structure has no reasonable likelihood of supporting roosting bats i.e. no suitable roosting features present.
<i>Low</i>	A structure which could be used opportunistically by individual bats i.e. one or more potential roost sites which do not provide sufficient space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions (e.g. temperature, light, humidity) and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats.
<i>Moderate</i>	A structure which could be used by bats but is not likely to support a roost of high conservation status (e.g. maternity roost). This structure would support features which exhibit suitable size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat for roosting bats.
<i>High</i>	A structure which is obviously suitable for supporting larger numbers of bats, on a regular basis and for longer periods of time.

2.2 Emergence Survey Methodology

2.2.1 Surveyor/s

The surveys were led by Katy Goddard and Ben Wilkie supported by suitably experienced bat surveyors Peter Clark and Ethan Taylor.

2.2.2 Survey area

The survey area comprised all eastern elevations of the house. This enabled survey coverage of all suitable access/egress and roosting features which were recorded during the preliminary bat roost assessment and will be affected by the proposal.

2.2.3 Survey date

The date and timings of the emergence surveys are presented in Table 2. The emergence surveys commenced 15 minutes prior to sunset and continued for at least 1.5 hours.

Table 2 survey dates and timings

Survey type	Date	Start	Finish	Sunset/sunrise
<i>Emergence</i>	06/05/2023	20:19	21:58	22:04
<i>Emergence</i>	06/06/2023	21:00	22:45	21:15

2.2.4 Survey description

The emergence surveys were undertaken in accordance Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition). Two surveyors were positioned in order to provide sufficient coverage of all potential access/egress points when stationary. All emergences, re-entries and general activity were recorded during the course of each survey. Recordings were later analysed using Sonobat bat call analysis software to confirm species identification.

2.2.5 Survey limitations

No limitations were encountered during the course of the surveys. Two emergence surveys supported by infra-red recording equipment were considered to be appropriate for the site.

2.2.6 Survey equipment

Survey equipment comprised:

- Wildlife Acoustics EMT 2 Pro
- Pettersson D240X and Edirol
- Elekon Batlogger M detector.
- Canon camera and IR illuminators

2.2.7 Weather conditions

Weather conditions during the surveys are provided in Table 3:

Table 3 emergence and re-entry weather conditions

Survey	Date	Precipitation		Temperature		Wind		Cloud Cover	
		Start	Finish	Start	Finish	Start	Finish	Start	Finish
Emergence	06/05/2023	Nil	Nil	12.0°C	13.0°C	Bf 2	Bf 1	100%	100%
Emergence	06/06/2023	Nil	Nil	17.0°C	15.0°C	Bf 2	Bf 2	0%	0%

3. Survey results

3.1 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

3.1.1 Building description relevant to bats and their roosts

The house comprises a single-storey brick-built bungalow which rises to a pitched and gable-end design roof clad with concrete interlocking roof and ridge tiles (Figure 1). The house is oriented northeast to southwest. A brick-built flat roof extension clad with roofing felt extends from the south-western elevation of the building (Figure 2). Two flat roof dormer windows extend from the north-eastern and south-western roof faces, the sides are clad with hanging concrete tiles and the face with uPVC boards. Lead flashing covers the joins between the dormer windows and main roof faces. The roof extends beyond the wall plate and the eaves are enclosed with uPVC fascia boards and under boards which adjoin to uPVC guttering. A bay window extends from the easternmost end of the north-eastern elevation (Figure 3). The windows and doors are set in uPVC frames that are tight fitting to the surrounding brickwork.

Internally, the house supports two distinct roof voids; both voids are at the side eaves which extend the full length of the building's north-eastern and south-western roof faces (Figure 7). Both voids support fibreglass insulation on the floor and heavy-duty bitumen lining on the roof (Figure 4). The voids are partially boarded and gaps in the eaves are infilled with fibreglass insulation. The spaces are used for storage and feature light cobwebbing throughout.



Figure 1 – north-eastern elevation and dormer windows



Figure 2 – south-western elevation with extension and dormer windows



Figure 3 – north-eastern elevation with bay window and dormer windows



Figure 4 – roof void with bitumen lining and stored items

An account of suitable access/egress features and recorded evidence of bat activity is given in table 2.

Table 4 – The recorded features and activity

Suitability	Evidence
Exterior	The following suitable access/egress and roosting features were recorded externally during the survey: - Lifted tiles on the south-western roof face (Figure 5). - Gaps under the hanging tiles on the dormer windows (Figure 6). - Slightly lifted sections of lead flashing.
Interior	The following access/egress and roosting features were recorded internally during the survey: - Tears in the bitumen lining causing hanging folds (Figure 7).



Figure 5 – lifted interlocking concrete tiles



Figure 6 – gaps under hanging tile on dormer windows



Figure 7 – tears in bitumen lining and hanging folds

3.1.2 *Site grounds description relevant to bats*

The immediate surrounds of the building comprise hard-standing, wooden decking, hedgerows, managed lawn, ornamental planting, and mature trees. Beyond this, West End is characterised by residential dwellings with associated gardens and services. In this context, the habitats within the footprint of the proposal are considered to be suitable for foraging and commuting bats and given their location within a landscape which is also suitable for commuting and foraging bats, it is likely that bats will commute and forage through the site.

3.2 **Emergence Surveys**

3.2.1 *Visit 1 - 6th May 2023 – Emergence Survey*

During the course of the emergence survey carried out on the 6th May 2023, no bats were recorded emerging from the house. The first recorded bat comprised a common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* which was recorded foraging off site at 21:16. Activity ceased until 21:56 when a common pipistrelle commuted north to south past the western elevation of the house. No further bat activity was recorded for the remainder of the survey.

3.2.2 *Visit 2 – 6th June 2023 – Emergence Survey*

During the course of the emergence survey carried out on the 6th June 2023, no bats were recorded emerging from the house. The first recorded bat comprised a common pipistrelle which was recorded commuting into the site from the south at 22:02. At 22:06, a common pipistrelle was recorded as it foraged through the rear garden from west to east. Two further registrations of common pipistrelle bats foraging through the garden were recorded at 22:13 and 22:17. At 22:25 a common pipistrelle was recorded foraging off site to the north. A single soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* foraged briefly through the site at 22:32. No further activity was recorded for the remainder of the survey.

3.3 **Other protected species**

During the course of the survey, no evidence of breeding birds or other protected species was recorded.

4. Discussion and Assessment of Impacts

4.1 Bat roost assessment and potential impacts

The preliminary roost assessment confirmed that the house supports moderate roost suitability i.e. a structure which could be used by bats but is not likely to support a roost of high conservation status.

On the basis that the house supports moderate suitability for roosting bats, there was considered to be a reasonable likelihood that bats would be present and affected by the proposed works which will impact the features detailed in Table 3.

However, no bats were recorded emerging from the house during the emergence surveys carried out during May and June 2023.

As such, there is considered to be no reasonable likelihood that bats will be present and affected by the proposed works.

The application site supports a small number of foraging and commuting common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle bats. Increasing lighting could impact this behaviour which would indirectly impact roosts.

4.2 Relevant legislation and policy

Circular 06/2005 identifies that applicants should not be required to provide information on protected species unless there is a reasonable likelihood that they will be present and affected by the proposed development. The site is considered to support habitats with suitability and potential for protected species and these may be affected by the proposed development. Therefore, the proposal triggers 'reasonable likelihood' under the Circular.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (commonly referred to as the Habitats Regulations) may apply should protected species be confirmed on site.

In the case that a European protected species is found to be present and impacted by the proposal, the local planning authority will be required to engage with the Habitat Regulations. Permission will be granted unless:

- a) the development is likely to result in a breach of the Habitat Regulations, and
- b) is unlikely to be granted an EPS licence from Natural England to allow the development to proceed under a derogation from the law (under licence).

When considering whether Natural England would not be unlikely to grant a licence for the identified impact, the local planning authority must consider the three tests which are set out in the Habitat Regulations:

1. the consented operation must be for 'preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or

economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment'; (Regulation 53(2)(e))

2. there must be 'no satisfactory alternative' (Regulation 53(9)(a)); and
3. the action authorised 'will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range' (Regulation 53(9)(b)).

Case-law (Morge vs. Hampshire County Council) has clarified that planning authorities are able to grant permission for developments that would cause a breach of the Regulations is likely (i.e. in the case of this proposal, destruction of a bat roost), provided that sufficient information is provided to give the planning authority assurance that the relevant EPSM licence is not unlikely to be granted - i.e. planning authorities also have a duty to assess planning applications against these tests.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Requirement for further surveys

Where there is a reasonable likelihood that a protected species will be present and impacted by the proposed development, planning authorities require further surveys to properly assess development proposals against relevant planning policy. An assessment into the requirement for further surveys is presented below, however in summary, all further surveys considered necessary have been completed.

5.1.1 *Bats*

In order to provide robust confirmation on the presence and status of bat roosts and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development as required by Circular 06/2005, further survey work in accordance with Natural England's standing advice and the BCT Good Practice Guidelines was required.

In accordance with these guidelines, further survey effort took the form of two presence/absence surveys undertaken during the bat active season. No further surveys in respect of roosting bats are considered necessary.

The affected areas of habitat within the site are not an important foraging or commuting resource. Therefore, further survey is considered unnecessary for understanding impacts on foraging and commuting bats beyond the presence/absence surveys that have been undertaken, subject to precautionary avoidance measures including a sensitive lighting scheme.

5.1.2 *Breeding birds*

Subject to the precautionary mitigation measures set out in Section 5.2.2, no further surveys are considered necessary.

5.2 Mitigation strategy

5.2.1 *Bats*

In order to limit any effects on foraging and commuting bats, external lighting should be limited to only that which is absolutely necessary for safety purposes, both during the construction phase and once the proposals are complete. The following lighting measures are required:

- Construction works between March and October should be undertaken during daylight hours only to avoid disturbance to bats that may forage and commute through or near the site.
- Lighting to the completed house should be as low brightness as possible, kept at a low level and directed away from all structures and boundaries. Lighting on sensors should not be so sensitive that foraging bats trigger them.

All lighting must follow the Bat Conservation Trusts and Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance on bats and artificial lighting (BCT, 2018).

5.2.2 *Breeding birds*

Care should be taken that the development does not disturb breeding birds. The bird nesting season is taken to be March to August inclusive. Any removal of suitable nest habitat will either need to be undertaken outside of this period or else checked to ensure that no nesting birds are present. If occupied nests are present then the nest must not be removed and works around the nest can only recommence once the nest becomes unoccupied of its own accord.

5.3 **Enhancements**

The delivery of biodiversity enhancement on development sites is promoted by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

Where opportunities exist it is best practice to provide enhancement features which encourage greater biodiversity within development sites in accordance with the NPPF and the Local Planning Authority's responsibilities under the NERC Act.

Options for enhancing biodiversity within the site which are proportionate to the scale of the development include:

- The provision of new bat roosting opportunities in the form two bat boxes. These should be installed as high as possible, at least 3m above ground within the site.
- The provision of bird nesting opportunities in the form of two open fronted boxes installed at least 2m above ground within the site.

6. Conclusion

The preliminary roost assessment confirmed that the house supports moderate suitability for roosting bats. Therefore, further survey effort was recommended to confirm the presence/absence of roosts, characterise any bat roost/s, assess the extent bats may be affected by the proposed works. In accordance with Natural England standing advice and BCT Good Practice Guidelines, two presence/absence surveys were undertaken during May and June. These have confirmed that the house does not support roosting bats. As such, no mitigation is considered necessary. Opportunities for ecological enhancement have been suggested for the site.

7. References

- **Altringham J D, 2003**, British Bats, Collins New Naturalist
- **Bat Conservation Trust, 2016**, BCT Bat Survey Guidelines Third edition
- **Bat Conservation Trust, 2018**, Guidance Note 08/18, Bats and artificial lighting in the UK, Bats and the Built Environment Series. BCT, London.
- **Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, 2017**, *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*. CIEEM, Winchester
- **ILP and BCT, 2018** *Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK: Guidance Note 08/18*. ILP, Warwickshire.
- **MHCLG, 2018**. *National Planning Policy Framework*. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; London.
- **Mitchell Jones AJ, 2004**, *Bat Mitigation guidelines*, English Nature
- **Mitchell Jones AJ and McLeish A P, The Bat Workers Manual**, JNCC
- **Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006**, Ch 3, s. 40
- **Natural England, 2011** Frequently asked wildlife questions: Bats. Natural England

Appendix 1 – Proposal plan





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