



BOTLEY MILL, MILL HILL, BOTLEY, SO30 2GB

BAT SURVEY REPORT

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August 2026

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SECTION I – INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Southern Planning Practice Ltd is instructed to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment in support of application F/26/101113 for the Installation of replacement roof sheeting and solar PV panels at Botley Mill, Mill Hill, Botley, SO30 2GB (the site). This report follows the identification of potential roost features during a preliminary roosts assessment (PRA) undertaken in June 2026.
- 1.2 The survey findings and recommendations can be found in section 4 and 5 of this report respectively. No bats were found to be roosting in the property. Low to moderate numbers of bats are utilising the site for foraging and commuting through the landscape.

Note: The findings of this report are valid for 18 months and should works not be undertaken within this timeframe the report may need updating.

SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.3 The building is part of a complex of buildings which form Botley Mills (centred on OS grid reference SU 5160 1307). The wider site is a historic mill complex located on the western edge of Botley village and adjacent to the River Hamble. Historically used for milling, the use of the site now comprises a mix of commercial, retail, heritage, and community use.
- 1.4 Botley village extends to the north of the site whilst much of the wider landscape comprises arable farmland, pasture, hedgerows, scattered woodland, the River Hamble and its network of watercourses and floodplain habitats.
- 1.5 The building subject to this application is a five-storey brick and asbestos roofed structure currently occupied at ground floor only. Internally there have been new floorboards installed in the last 2-3 years.

Figure I. Site location in the wider landscape



Note. From MAGIC (04/06/2026).

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- I.6** The development proposed comprises the replacement of the existing asbestos-sheet with profiled metal roof sheeting, and to install a solar panel array on the new roof of the east and west elevations (figure 2). The works will require the installation of scaffolding.

[illegible]

SECTION 2 – LEGISLATION

2.1 The legislation and planning policy detailed in this section is intended to be a summary only. The relevant pieces of legislation and planning policy should be referred to for full information. Legislation and planning policy pertaining to protected habitats and species can be found at the following websites:

- Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended):
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/contents>
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1012/contents>
- Countryside Rights of Way Act, 2000:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/contents>
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents>
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2023:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

BATS

2.2 In Britain all bat species and their roosts are fully legally protected, by both domestic and international legislation. This means that it is a criminal offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats
- Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
- Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.

2.3 In England and Wales, the relevant pieces of legislation are the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended); the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017; the

Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act, 2000; and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC), 2006.

- 2.4 People convicted of committing bat crimes can face six months imprisonment and/or unlimited fines.
- 2.5 In order to undertake any activity which would otherwise result in any of the above offences being committed, it may be necessary to obtain a European Protected Species (EPS) licence from the relevant statutory body (Natural England). Activities that may require a licence involve works to buildings, other structures and trees.
- 2.6 As a signatory to the Bonn Convention (Agreement of Bats in Europe), the UK is also required to protect their habitats, requiring the identification and protection from damage or disturbance of important feeding areas, for example by loss of habitat or inappropriate lighting. The UK is also a signatory to the Bern Convention designed to ensure conservation and protection of wild plant and animal species and their natural habitats. All species of UK bats are listed in Appendix II of both the Bonn and Bern Conventions.
- 2.7 Some species of bats are also species of principal importance, as listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

SECTION 3 – METHODOLOGY

DESK STUDY

Designated sites/ protected species

- 3.1 A search for protected habitats and species within 2km of the site was undertaken using the online Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) run by DEFRA.
- 3.2 Ordnance Survey maps and aerial images were assessed to check for other relevant data on notable habitats and species nearby including ponds and wildlife corridors where the site connects into the surrounding area.

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

- 3.3 A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) comprised of an external daytime walkover survey (DWS) and was undertaken in accordance with Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition (Collins (ed) 2023). The DWS was undertaken on the 4th of June 2026 by Nichola Windebank (MSc. (CIEEM Qualifying membership) who has 5 years of survey experience.
- 3.4 The building was checked internally and externally for potential access points and roosting features which could support bats, as well as any signs of roosting bats or bat activity including droppings, insect feeding remains, worn entrances and staining. The PRA concluded that the building had moderate potential for roosting bats. Details can be found in the associated PRA and will not be repeated here.

EMERGENCE SURVEYS

- 3.5 All surveys were carried out in accordance with best practice guidelines as detailed in Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines, 4th edition (Collins 2023).
- 3.6 Two emergence surveys were undertaken on the 29th of June 2026 and the 3rd of August 2026. All surveys commenced 15 minutes before sunset and continued until 1.5 – 2 hours after sunset. On all surveys weather was suitable for bat emergence and activity. Four surveyors were present on both surveys however there were still some sections of the elevations which were not visible from the ground. To address this an Echo Touch 2 Pro

and 2 Nightfox Whiskers Night Vision Binoculars were also placed inside of the building on the 3rd floor which was assessed as being the most likely route any bats within the building would take to commute through or exit from the building. Any bats echolocating on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th floor would also be heard and recorded.

- 3.7 Data was recorded using two Echo Touch 2 Pro (one inside and one outside of the building). In addition, all surveyors were equipped with Nightfox Whiskers Night Vision Binoculars (NVA's) and a handheld Elekon Batscanner. All activity was recorded with particular focus on bats emerging from the building
- 3.8 Post survey data was analysed using Kaleidoscope Lite Analysis Software and footage from the NVA's was analysed to ensure any activity missed during darkness was included in the survey results.

LIMITATIONS

- 3.9 As identified above not all elevations could be seen from ground level however measures were taken to ensure that if bats were identified within the building then further survey effort could be implemented.

SECTION 4 – RESULTS

DESK STUDY

Statutory and Non-Statutory Designated Sites

- 4.1 The Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) (Southern Planning Practice June 2026) notes that the site is situated adjacent to the River Hamble, an area of international and national ecological importance. Internationally designated sites associated with the Hamble Estuary, include the Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar Site, together with the Upper Hamble Estuary and Woods SSSI, approximately 0.65 km to the south of the site. The wider area (2km radius) also contains a network of non-statutory ecological designations, including Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), ancient woodland and Local Nature Reserves, notably Sherecroft Farm Meadow SINC approximately 150m to the north of the site which has been impacted by recent local developments. All these areas would provide excellent roosting, foraging and commuting habitats for a variety of bat species.

Protected Species

- 4.2 MAGIC indicates 4 EPS license have been granted by Natural England within 2km of the site for works within the last 10 years with species identified as Brown Long Eared, Natterers, Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle.
- 4.3 NBN Atlas has 5 verified records of bats within 2km of the site within the last 10 years (no. records in brackets);
- Common pipistrelle (1)
 - Soprano pipistrelle (1)
 - Serotine (1)
 - Brown Long Eared (1)
 - Daubenton's bat (1)
- 4.4 Recent transect and phase 2 emergence surveys in the rear car park and along the river corridor within the site indicates high levels of bat activity along the river corridors adjacent

to the buildings with species noted including Daubenton's, Serotines, Noctule, Soprano Pipistrelle and Common Pipistrelle.

EMERGENCE SURVEYS

- 4.5 The emergence surveys took place to determine if bat roosts are present or likely to be absent from the building, and where roosts are present the characteristics of those roosts. The whole building was observed as although only the roof is proposed to be replaced works would require scaffold to be erected across the building which would have the potential to block or cause disturbance to roosts on any level of the building.
- 4.6 The environmental conditions at the time of the surveys are detailed in table I below.

Table I. Environmental conditions

Date	Start	Finish	Temp (°C)	Wind	Cloud (%)	Precipitation
29/06/26	21:08	22:45	18 - 16	1	10	0
03/08/26	20:33	22:30	25 - 22	0	<5	0

Note: Wind in Beaufort scale

- 4.7 During both surveys four surveyors were placed around the site to cover all angles of the building as detailed in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Location of surveyors shown with red x with building outlined in red.



Note. Image adapted from google earth maps 03/08/2026.

FIRST SURVEY

- 4.8 No bats were seen emerging from the building during the first survey. This was confirmed by review of the night vision infrared footage. Overall, very low levels of activity were heard or observed from outside of the building. 8 Common pipistrelle calls, 4 Soprano Pipistrelle calls and 2 Noctule calls were logged on the Echo Touch 2 Pro at the rear (north) of the site.
- 4.9 Activity commenced within the first 20 minutes of the survey with common pipistrelles heard but not seen by all surveyors. To the front of the site the two surveyors only recorded two bats all nights.
- 4.10 To the east of the building the surveyor was adjacent to the river corridor where bats are known to forage and commute. Views of the eastern elevation of the building are limited by other existing buildings. In this location no bats were seen however foraging and commuting Common and Soprano Pipistrelle bats could be heard almost constantly from 21:34 to 22:14 and it is most likely they were within the river corridor. A single Noctule was heard but not seen at 21:53.

- 4.11 To the rear of the building views were also limited by existing buildings although the roof was entirely visible. Only four bat calls (Common and Soprano pipistrelle) were heard but not seen between 21:37 and 22:29. A single Noctule was heard not seen at 21:53. At 22:33 a single Soprano pipistrelle was observed foraging over the water to the north (west of the surveyor) for 5 minutes. It then left up the river corridor to the north.
- 4.12 The recording equipment internally recorded no echo locating bats or any other noises until a dog began barking at around 5am. The night vision cameras recorded no visual evidence of bats.
- 4.13 During the first survey all surveyors noted that the site is heavily lit with flood lighting and lower-level lighting. All elevations of the buildings were lit all night, and lighting remains on until morning. Overall, this would be likely to deter bats from using site or entering the building to roost and may explain the very low levels of observed activity.

Figure 4. Observed activity.

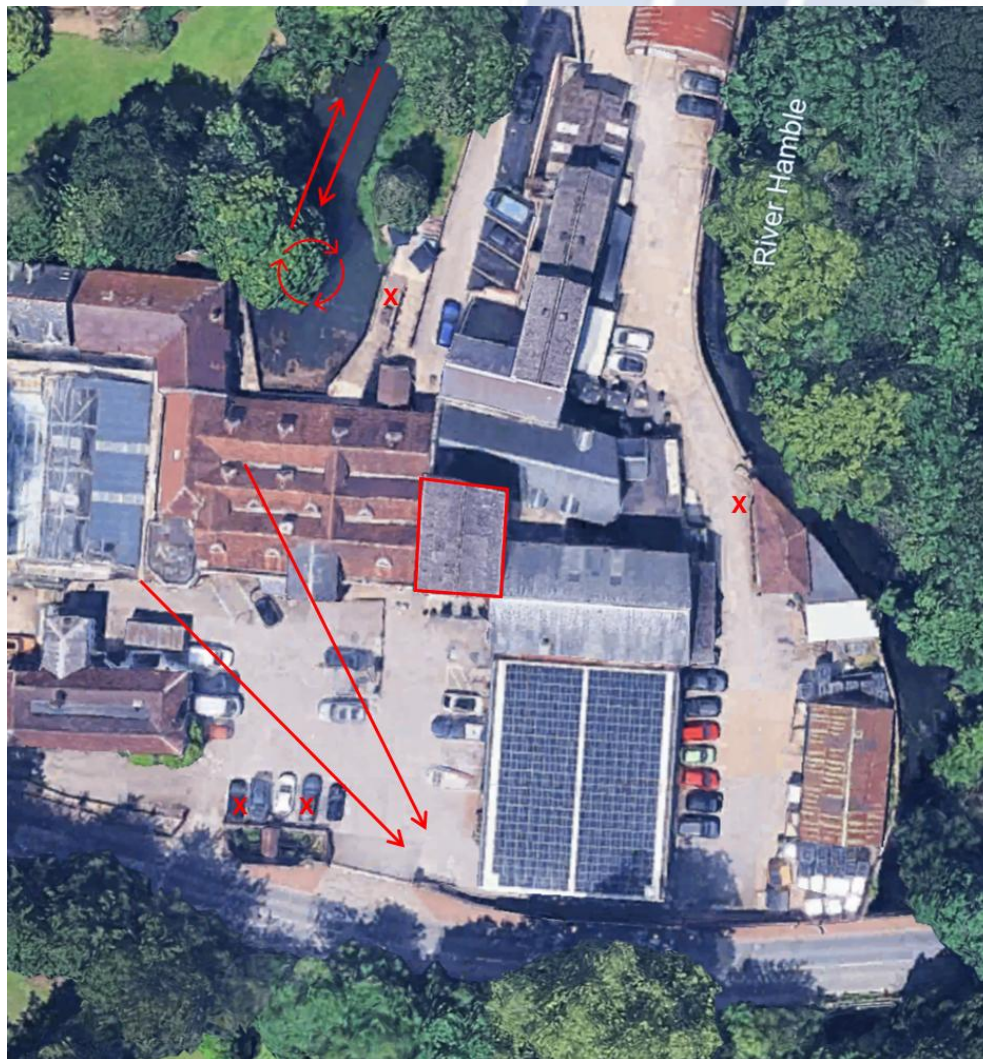


Note. Image adapted from google earth maps 03/08/2026.

SECOND SURVEY

- 4.14 No bats were seen emerging from the building during the second survey. This was confirmed by review of the night vision infrared footage. The Echo Touch 2 Pro recorded 2 Noctule calls and 8 Common Pipistrelle calls.
- 4.15 Activity commenced 1 minute before sunset with a Noctule heard but not seen at 20:47. Observed activity was low again on this survey with 12 calls heard along the eastern boundary adjacent to the river corridor. 12 bats were heard to the rear adjacent to the other river corridor. To the front of the site 7 calls were heard. Species were limited to Common Pipistrelles, Soprano Pipistrelles, Noctules and a Serotine.
- 4.16 To the east of the building the surveyor adjacent to the river corridor saw no bats. Views of the eastern elevation of the building are limited by other existing buildings. Foraging and commuting Common and Soprano Pipistrelle bats could be heard sporadically from within the river corridor. Two Noctules were heard but not seen at 21:44 and 21:56.
- 4.17 To the rear of the building views were also limited by existing buildings. Calls began at 21:00 with Common Pipistrelles heard foraging but not seen. Likely within the river corridor behind the surveyor which is screened by vegetation. Noctules were heard at 21:49, 21:53 and 21:57. A single Soprano pipistrelle was observed foraging over the water to the north (west of the surveyor) for 7 minutes.
- 4.18 The recording equipment internally recorded no echo locating bats or any other noises. The night vision cameras recorded no visual evidence of bats.
- 4.19 Once again the buildings are noted to be heavily lit. Night vision cameras to the front elevation were not required until an hour after sunset and other than in the river corridor the elevations remained lit so that had a bat emerged it would have been visible to the naked eye.

Figure 4. Observed activity.



Note. Image adapted from google earth maps 04/08/2026.

CONCLUSIONS

- 4.20 The area of the site containing all the buildings is very heavily lit with artificial lighting creating an area which does not naturally attract roosting bats. Levels of activity on the site and around the buildings was very low. No emergences were observed from either of the buildings during the surveys and the internal recording equipment did not identify any evidence of bats inside of the building. The river corridors contain commuting and foraging bats, and the wider landscape is a mosaic of highly suitable and well connected habitats however despite this it seems unlikely that bats will utilise the buildings on the site in the future if the levels of lighting do not alter.

SECTION 5 – RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Recommendations are made below for works to mitigate any impacts on bats utilising the site. Any proposed mitigation or compensation must be appropriate and proportionate.
- 5.2 No bats appear to be utilising the building as a roost however bats are known to utilise linear features to navigate through the landscape and bats are utilising the river corridors and vegetated landscapes around the buildings.
- 5.3 Inappropriate lighting can have a significant impact on the foraging and commuting behaviours of bats and other nocturnal animals. During construction all works should take place during daylight hours to prevent the need for any additional lighting. Any new lighting should be designed to follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) and Bat Conservation Trust Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night. All new lighting must be approved by the Local Planning Authority.
- 5.4 As the building is heavily lit it would be perverse to insert any bat bricks or tiles into the building as it is highly unlikely they would be used by bats. However, the wider site does contain some large, mature trees, close to the river corridors which would be suitable for the siting of bat boxes.
- 5.5 Many breathable roofing membranes pose a serious threat to bats causing entanglement and death. Any new membranes must have passed a 'snagging propensity test (with certificate provided) and this must be a condition of any permission granted for works which involve roof alterations requiring new membrane.
- 5.6 Should any bats be found to be roosting within the building during the construction phase all works must cease immediately and advice sought from a suitably qualified bat licensed ecologist. A license from Natural England may then be required before further works can proceed.

REFERENCES

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