

Ecology response 10/10/24 for H/24/97298 27 CROWS NEST LANE, BOTLEY,
SOUTHAMPTON, SO32 2DD

Two Storey Side Extension

Alex Stone

10/10/24

I have reviewed the Bat Survey Report by Hampshire Ecological Services (September 2024). Bat droppings were found within the main roof void and three emergence surveys were conducted, but no bats were seen emerging. The house is assessed to be an occasional non-breeding day roost for low numbers of common pipistrelle bats. A bat license from *Natural England* is required before any work can be undertaken on the roof or roof void. *If the former licence is still in force, this may need amendment/ return fulfilling before a new licence application can be made.*

The bat license can only be applied for after planning permission has been granted.

The invasive plants *Cotoneaster horizontalis* and *Rhododendron ponticum* were found on site, with the cotoneaster growing along the eastern elevation of the house. It is an offense to allow these plants to spread into the wild. The report recommends their removal to avoid accidentally spreading them. Information on removing these species is found in section 5.6.4 of the report.

Any vegetation which needs to be removed to facilitate the building work must be removed outside of nesting bird season which is late February through August inclusive. If this is not possible, a suitably qualified ecologist must check for nesting birds no more than 24 hours before vegetation clearance.

If evidence of an active bird's nest is found before or during works, work must stop and a 5 m buffer must be erected around the nest to protect it from disturbance until after the chicks have fledged and left the nest.

If work has not started before the end of September 2025 an update walkover survey will be required prior to development.

The mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures recommended in figures 8 and 9 in section 6 of the report are appropriate and can be conditioned. The report (section 5.7) advises the applicants that the bat surveys needed to inform the bat license must be up to date, so any delay in applying for the Natural England bat license could mean having to wait until the next survey season for additional survey data.

There is a pond in the rear garden, but it would not be disturbed by the proposed side extension. The pond should be protected from accidental disturbance by construction operatives. As this site is in an amber impact risk zone for great crested newts precautionary working methods are required to ensure that if any great crested newts are present on site, they will not be harmed during construction.

All building materials to be stored on hard standing or on pallets, as far as possible from hedgerows, scrub or potential habitat.

Any excavations must be covered at night or be fitted with a small animal escape ramp

No fires can be lit on site.

Waste must be stored in a skip and not be allowed to accumulate in piles which could be used by wildlife.

Any animals found on site should not be handled but be allowed to move away to a place of safety on their own.

If any great crested newts are found, all work must stop immediately, and Natural England must be contacted for advice.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist

12/6/24

The applicant has provided a Bat Mitigation Plan by David Leach Ecology Ltd (January 2019) from the previous application H/17/81111 and photos of the bat roost features that were installed as compensation for the loss of previous bat roost access points. These are three ridge tile access points with gaps in the roofing felt (type 1 bitumen) to allow bats access into the existing and new roof voids, and an externally mounted bat box. The roofing soft strip works were done under the ecological supervision of David Leach the license holder, after a pre-works survey.

Bats move between roosts, so just because they may not have used it yet, does not mean that they may not use it in the future. This is a historic bat roost, and it must continue to be protected. The presence of the compensatory bat access points into the new loft and connection with the existing loft means that there is high potential for bats to be using this building, even if the residents have not seen bats or any evidence.

This proposal would tie into the loft space of the house, which continues to be accessible to bats, so will require bat update surveys from a bat licensed ecologist before determination. A preliminary bat roost appraisal is not needed because the mitigation plan provides the number and locations of the bat roost features that were built in during the previous work. If bats are found to be using these features, then a license may be needed to proceed with this proposal.

Please make sure that this Bat Mitigation Plan report is saved in the documents for this application.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist

28/5/24

This site is in an amber impact risk zone for great crested newts. This building is a confirmed bat roost, with brown long eared bat droppings (verified by DNA analysis) recorded in the roof void in June 2018. There is a previous application H/17/81111 for a two-storey side extension, single storey rear extension and porch which was permitted in September 2017, however there is no record of a bat survey or ecology report with this application. In comparing the site photos from that application and the photo of the house on Google maps I can see that the two-storey side extension, single storey rear extension and front porch have already been built. This proposal is for a side extension to the south.

As the applicants' names are the same as the names on the earlier application it would be very helpful to have some history about the record of the bat droppings and any bat surveys and the work that has already been done on the house. When were the droppings found and identified? Who identified them and under what circumstances? What mitigation for brown long-eared bats has already been done? This information is required to determine whether further surveys will be required.

Biodiversity enhancements will be required in accord with Local Plan policy DM 11 and NPPF paragraph 180. A bat brick and a swift 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.wildaboutgardens.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-03/WAG16%20Bats%20updated%202022%20WEB.pdf> - Stars of the Night guide to attract bats into your garden

<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/>

www.bats.org.uk/resources/guidance-for-professionals/landscape-and-urban-design-for-bats-and-biodiversity

<https://ptes.org/my-garden/>

<https://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/foodplants.php>

Lisa Malter

Ecologist