# Bat Scoping Survey: Michann, Hedge End

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|---|---|
| Client | Mr T Lockhart |
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NATURAL SOLUTIONS


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# Non-technical Summary

## Background

In June 2024, Crossman Associates was commissioned to undertake a bat survey of Michann, Albert Rd, Hedge End, Southampton SO30 0DJ. Development proposals include an extension.

## Methods

The scoping survey was undertaken by Toby Bowman, an experienced ecologist and bat worker. The building was inspected both externally and internally for any evidence of bat / bird presence, such as droppings, food remains, staining or actual bats / birds.

## Results

The dwelling is located within a residential area. Overall, the dwelling is in good condition. NO bat droppings were found in the roof void. However, the roof provides features suitable for roosting bats and include broken/lifted roof and hanging wall tiles and gaps in the soffit.

The property has moderate suitability for roosting bats.

The bat emergence survey confirmed likely absence of roosting bats.

## Recommendations

It is recommended that the following be undertaken as part of the development:

- Precautionary approach to be taken in relation to birds.
- Install bird boxes on the exterior of the new development.

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# 1. Background

1.1. In June 2024, Crossman Associates was commissioned to undertake a bat survey of Michann, Albert Rd, Hedge End, Southampton SO30 0DJ. The Ordnance Survey grid reference for the site is SU 48731 12145. Development proposals include an extension.

1.2. Figure 1 under Appendix II provides a site location map.

1.3. The objectives of the survey were to:

- Make an assessment of the likely presence or absence of bats
- Identify any legislative or planning policy constraints relevant to the site
- Determine the need for further surveys, compensation or mitigation

## Site Description

1.4. The building comprises a single storey detached bungalow, with a converted loft space and a maintained garden.

1.5. The property is in a residential environment in Hedge End, Hampshire. Surrounding areas tend to include similar dwellings with maintained. Wider landscape include parkland and woodland.

## Legislation

1.6. In the UK all species of bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended and the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2017. Under this legislation it is a strict liability offence to injure or destroy a bat or to disturb damage or destroy the resting place of a bat.

Under this legislation the UK is obliged to fully take into account bats within the planning process and the level of bat activity on-site must be fully assessed prior to the assessment the planning application.

1.7. In Britain all wild birds are granted legal protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) (as amended). This legislation protects the birds, their eggs and nests whilst being built or in use.

# 2. Methodology

## Desktop Study

*Data search*

2.1. The MAGIC website was accessed to gain information on any statutory site designations within 4 km of the site that are designated for bats.

*National Planning Policy*

2.2. National Planning Policy has been reviewed for policies that relate to nature conservation relevant to the site.

## Field Survey

*Bat scoping survey*

2.3. A bat scoping survey was carried out on the 26th June 2024 by Toby Bowman, an experienced ecologist and bat worker.

2.4. The building was methodically inspected internally and externally for any evidence of roosting bats, including actual bats, droppings, urine staining and evidence of feeding activity such as discarded insect wings and cases.

2.5. The building was also assessed for its suitability to support roosting bats by considering several factors including whether bats can access internal and external voids within the building and whether these voids provide adequate protection and shelter for roosting bats. If the building is not confirmed as a roost, it is assessed from High to Negligible Suitability as follows;

- **High Suitability** – many roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be old, large and rural
- **Moderate Suitability** – some roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be old, rural with some recent maintenance
- **Low Suitability** – few roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be modern, urban and well maintained
- **Negligible Suitability** – insignificant roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be small, modern, urban and very well maintained.

*Birds*

2.6. The building was also inspected for the presence of birds including house sparrow *Passer domesticus.* The building was checked for field signs including nesting material, accumulations of droppings and/or pellets.

*Evening emergence/ activity surveys*

2.7. Two evening emergence/ activity surveys were carried out by two bat surveyors led by experience bat worker Toby Bowman. The surveyors were positioned so that all aspects of the building suitable for roosting bats could be observed. The Surveys were undertaken during suitable weather conditions. The emergence surveys commenced at 15 minutes before sunset and continued for two hours. All general bat activity on site was also noted.

2.8. Echo meter touch, Peersonic bat detectors and IR cameras were used together with visual observations on flight patterns and feeding behaviour to aid identification to species level. Recordings of bat calls were made and later analysed using dedicated computer software Audacity and wildlife acoustics.

# 3. Results

## Desktop Study

*Data Search*

3.1. The MAGIC website informed that there are no statutory sites within 4 km of the site designated for bats.

*Planning Policy*

3.2. National policy guidance is provided by National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which sets out the Government' planning policies for England and how they should be applied to planning applications;

<u>Conserving and enhancing the natural environment</u>

Planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) 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);

b) 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;

c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

e) 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

f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

Habitats and Biodiversity

When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) 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;

b) 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;

c) 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

d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

## Field Survey

*Bat scoping survey*

3.3. The external and internal conditions of the buildings are described in the table below and photographs can be found in Appendix II.

3.4. A table within Appendix III; information sheets set out the criteria for the way a building is assessed for its potential to support roosting bats.

| Building | Feature | Feature Description | Bat suitability |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Michann,**<br><br>**Hedge End** | Overview | Detached single storey house bungalow, with converted loft space. The property is in good condition and is currently occupied.<br><br>No bat droppings were found inside or outside of the property. | Moderate Suitability ☒ |
| | Exterior | Brick walls no gaps or cracks were observed. The windows and doors are all well sealed.<br><br>There are gaps on the hanging wall tiles around the dormer windows.<br><br>A maintained garden is present at the front and rear of the dwelling. | |
| | Interior | Areas of living accommodation are composed of rooms with well-sealed rooms with plaster and painted walls and ceilings. The roof void is compost by exposed timbers and type one bituminous felt lining. No gaps were observed. | |
| | Roof | The roof is clad with flat roof tiles. There are several lifted/ broken tiles and gaps on the roof.<br><br>The chimney brick work is in good condition and the flash work which seals the chimney to the roof remains well fit in place | |

*Bat emergence surveys*

3.5. The building was assessed as having moderate suitability for roosting bats. Therefore, two emergence surveys were undertaken on the 31st July and 21st August 2024. The surveys were led by Toby Bowman, an experienced bat worker.

3.6. The table below details the results of the surveys.

Table 2; Bat emergence table

| Survey Date | 25/07/2024 | 27/08/2024 |
|---|---|---|
| Survey Conditions | Cloud: 75%<br>Weather: Dry<br>Wind level 0 / 1<br>Start temp 24$^0$C<br>End temp 22$^0$C<br>Sunset time 20.52 | Cloud: 90%<br>Weather: Dry<br>Wind level 0 / 2<br>Start temp 17$^0$C<br>End temp 16$^0$C<br>Sunset time 20.13 |
| Emergence survey | No bat emergence | No bat emergence |
| General bat activity. Non emergence | 21.05 – 21.30<br>Three passes by a common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* bat seen/ heard flying from northeast to south/ southwest back and forth. | 20.21<br>A pass by common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* bat seen/ heard flying from east to west in front of the building. |

*Birds*

3.7. No birds or bird nesting activity was recorded in any aspect of the dwelling.

## Evaluation

*Scoping survey*

*Bats*

3.8. The site is in a residential area; however, lies near to parkland and woodland, which is likely to function as commuting and foraging resource for different species of bats.

3.9. The lifted tiles and other gaps within the roof have the potential to offer roosting opportunities for crevice-dwelling bats, particularly *Pipistrelle sp.*

*Emergence / activity surveys*

3.10. During the bat emergence survey, no bats were recorded either exiting or entering the dwelling, so bats are not considered to be roosting within the building.

3.11. During the survey common pipistrelle bat was observed flying along the eastern and southwestern boundary. The garden combined with neighbouring and similar gardens are considered to provide a useful commuting area for local bats.

# 4. Recommendations

4.1. The recommendations in the paragraphs below are provided to help ensure that wildlife and important ecological features are protected during the course of works. Recommendations also set out mitigation measures to minimise harm where this cannot be avoided and provide compensation measures to allow the proposals to meet current legislative and planning policy objectives.

4.2. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) states that a public authority must 'in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity; Conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat'.

4.3. The NPPF (2021) states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

## Species recommendations

### Bats

4.4. All bats within the UK are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as Amended and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Under this registration there are strict liability offence to injure or destroy a bat or to disturb, damage or destroy the resting place (roost) of a bat. Under the Bonn Convention, the UK is obliged through the planning system to protect important bat habitats.

4.5. Due to the transitory nature of bats, there remains a small possibility that bats could be encountered during works; therefore, all works will proceed under a precautionary approach. Tiles and roof panels will be removed in a vertical rather than horizontal sliding motion. Roof timbers, leadwork, roofing felt, soffits and masonry will be dismantled using a 'soft' approach taking care with cavity walls where present. All site workers will be vigilant at all times and in the very unlikely event that a bat is found, then works must stop immediately and advice should be sought from Crossman Associates or Natural England

*Other species*

*Birds*

4.6. All nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended), which makes it an offence to damage or destroy a nest when being built or in use. This legislation has implications for the timing of vegetation clearance and renovation works.

Any clearance works should take place outside of the nesting bird season, which runs from March to September; any works to be carried out within this period will be overseen by an ecologist or an ecological clerk of works (ECoW). Prior to the commencement of works, a thorough check will be made for nesting birds or dependent young. If birds are found to be nesting and or rearing young, then works in the vicinity will be deferred until young have fledged and left the nest.

## Ecology enhancements

4.7. During the construction phase of the development, there is an opportunity to incorporate inexpensive ecological enhancements that aim to increase the biodiversity of the site.

4.8. New nesting opportunities will be provided for the local bird population with a particular emphasis on house sparrows (which have suffered significant decline) and it is recommended that a sparrow nest box is installed within the development.

4.9. Sparrow nest boxes are ideally fitted below eaves. Suitable models include the Vivara Woodstone Sparrow Nest Box, which is suitable for integral and surface mounting. This model is strong, durable, long lasting and available in brown or stone colour. Models can be found on vivira.co.uk.

# 5. Limitations

5.1. This report records wildlife found during the survey and anecdotal evidence of sightings. It does not record any plants or animals that may appear at other times of the year and were therefore not evident at the time of visit.

5.2. The advice contained in this report relate primarily to factual survey results and general guidance only. On all legal matters you are advised to take legal advice.

# 6. References

**Bat Conservation Trust (BCT)** *Bats and Lighting in the UK* BCT

**HMSO (1981)** *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and subsequent amendments).* HMSO

**HMSO (1995)** *Biodiversity.* The UK Steering Group Report

**Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)** *Common Standards Monitoring Guidance for Reptiles and Amphibians* (2004) JNCC

**Mitchell-Jones, A.J (2004)** *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* English Nature

**Mitchell-Jones, A.J , & McLeish A.P. (2012)** *The Bat Worker's Manual* (4th Edition)

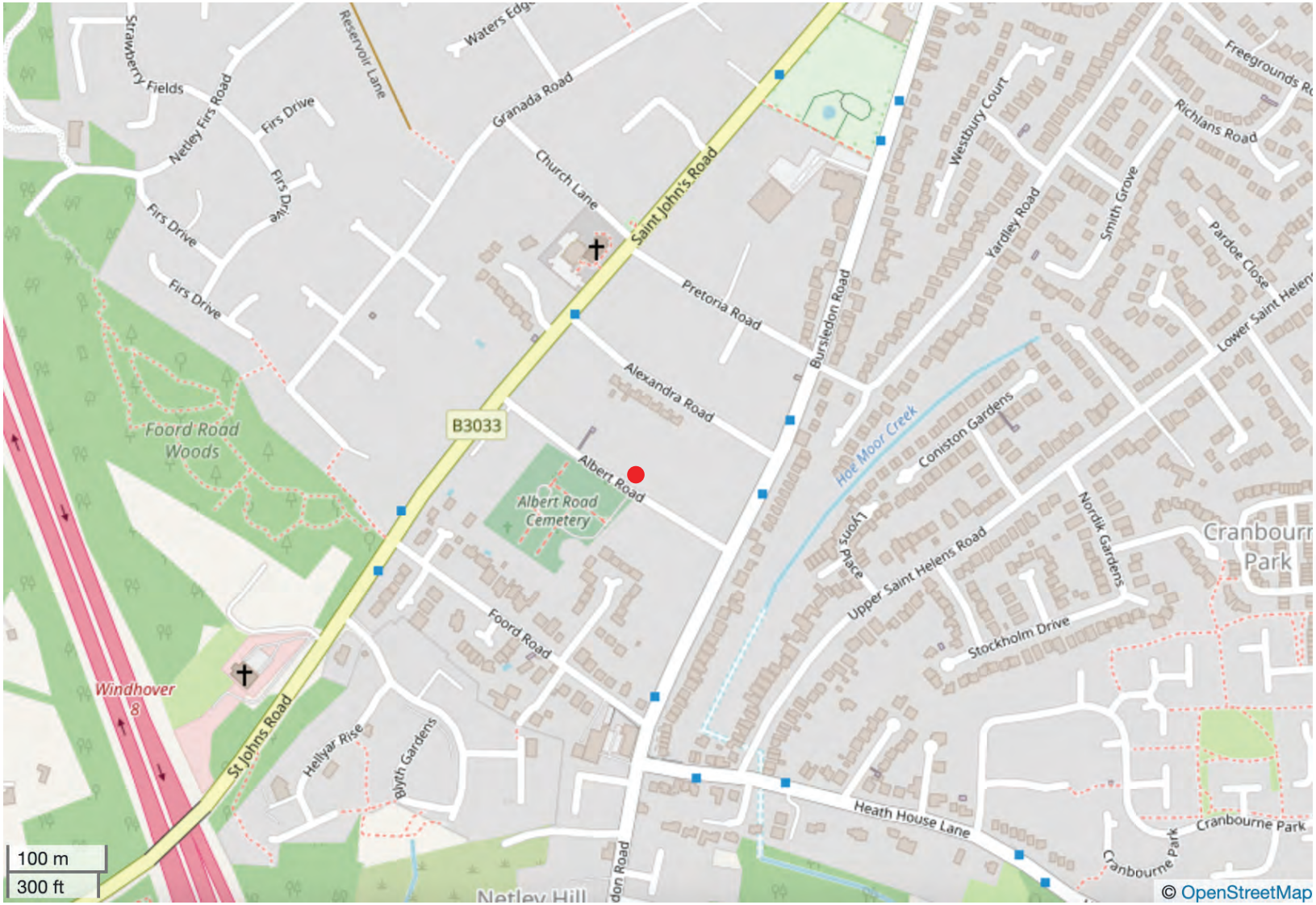
**Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) Website** at www.magic.gov.uk

**Stace, C. (1997)** *New Flora of the British Isles 2nd Edition.* Cambridge University Press

**TSO (2021)** *National Planning Policy Framework.* TSO

**TSO (2006)** *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act* TSO

# Appendix I – Site Figures

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Site location

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|---|---|
| Client | Mr T Lockhart |
| Title | Location plan |
| Site | Michann, Hedge End |
| Figure | 1 |
| Date | 17 July 2024 |
| Scale | xxx |

# Appendix II – Site Photographs

# Photographs 1- 3

## Photograph 1:

Front - southwestern elevation

Lifted roof tiles detail

## Photograph 2:

Southeastern elevation

Roof tiles gap detail

## Photograph 3:

Back - northern elevation

Hanging tiles gap detail

# Photographs 4 - 6

## Photograph 4:

Soffit gap

## Photograph 5:

Roof void

## Photograph 6:

Garden

# Appendix III– Information Sheets

## Bat Habitat Suitably Criteria

| Bat Roosting Suitability | Criteria | Survey requirement to prove likely absence |
|---|---|---|
| Negligible | Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats. | No further survey work required |
| Low | A building, structure or tree with one or more potential roosting sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically; however, these possible roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used by large numbers of bats and are unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation roosts. | One activity survey |
| Medium | A building, structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to the size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habit, but is unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status. | Two activity surveys |
| High | A building, structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. | Three activity surveys |

Survey requirements are taken from Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (2016), which is the recognised industry standard guidance used by local planning authorities and other statutory consultees.

# Information sheet  Artificial bird nesting boxes for Buildings: Swifts, house martins and house sparrows

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Habibat house sparrow nest box

Vivara woodstone sparrow nest box; suitable for both integral fitment or surface mounting

Ibstock Swift boxes are also suitable for house sparrows. Can be customised to suit any exterior finish.Site boxes under eaves, away from windows  and direct sunlight.

Ibstock Box

Sparrow boxes  should be grouped together and be at least 2 m of the ground. The boxes can be also be sited on gable walls. At least 3 per averaged size house.

Swifts boxes should be at least 5 m above the ground with an clear un-obstructed flight path.

Schwegler model 9b

Schwegler house martin box model 9 b double is a suitable box for house martins and can be used to encourage the uptakeof a building by this species. The boxes can be attached to the exterior walls in a sheltered position; ideally beneath the eaves. At least two sets should be placed on an averaged size house.