



Bat Mitigation Strategy Report

19 Grovelands Lane
Spencer's Wood
Reading
RG7 1DP

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LIABILITIES:

Whilst every effort has been made to guarantee the accuracy of this report, it should be noted that living animals and plants are capable of migration/establishing and whilst such species may not have been located during the survey duration, their presence may be found on a site at a later date.

This report provides a snap shot of the species that were present at the time of the survey only and does not consider seasonal variation. Furthermore, where access is limited or the site supports habitats which are densely vegetated only dominant species may be recorded.

The recommendations contained within this document are based on a reasonable timeframe between the completion of the survey and the commencement of any works. If there is any delay between the commencement of works that may conflict with timeframes laid out within this document, or have the potential to allow the ingress of protected species, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted.

It is the duty of care of the landowner/developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to or during works.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 The Ecology Partnership was commissioned by Lewis Tennent to develop a bat mitigation strategy for 19 Grovelands Road, Spencers Wood, Reading, RG7 1DP, hereafter referred to as the 'site'. This is to avoid adverse impacts from the proposed development works.
- 1.2 A Preliminary Bat Roosting Assessment (PRA) was undertaken by the Ecology Partnership at the site in September 2023. This identified a soprano pipistrelle bat roost in the roof void of the bungalow due to the presence of droppings which was confirmed by DNA analysis. The other structures onsite were considered to have negligible potential for roosting bats. In 2024, Dr Jonty Denton undertook three dusk emergence surveys of the bungalow which saw no emergences.

Site Context and Status

- 1.3 The site (SU 71982 66848) is located in Spencers Wood, and is surrounded by residential dwellings to the north, east and south, with a cemetery to the west. The site comprises a single residential dwelling with a parking depot located in the west.



Figure 1: Site location

Legislation

- 1.4 Under the NERC Act (2006) it is now the duty of every Government department in carrying out its functions *“to have regard, so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biological diversity in accordance with the Convention”*.
- 1.5 Bats are covered by the following relevant legislation: The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended); the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000; the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC, 2006); and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010).

Under the WCA 1981 it is an offence to:

- Intentionally, recklessly or deliberately disturb a roosting or hibernating bat i.e. disturbing it whilst it is occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection)
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a roost (i.e. a structure or place used for shelter or protection).

Under the CHSR 2010 it is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat.
- Intentionally, recklessly or deliberately disturb a bat, in particular (i) any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; (ii) any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability in the case of hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or (iii) any disturbance which is likely to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place (roost) of a bat.

2.0 METHODOLOGY**Internal and External Building Inspections**

- 2.1 An internal and external bat survey was undertaken on 21st September 2023 by The Ecology Partnership.

2.2 The surveyors undertook an internal and external examination of the building to be affected by the proposed works, including all accessible roof voids. The surveyor assessed the buildings visually and searched for evidence such as:

- Staining beneath or around a hole caused by natural oils in bat fur.
- Bat droppings beneath a hole, roost or resting area.
- Bat droppings and/or insect remains beneath a feeding area.
- Audible squeaking from within a hole.
- Insects (especially flies) around a hole.
- Dead bats.

2.3 Buildings which are considered to have a higher potential to support roosting bats would include the following:

- Agricultural buildings (e.g. farmhouses, barns and out buildings) of traditional brick or stone construction and/or with exposed beams;
- Buildings with weatherboarding and/or hanging tiles that are within 200m of woodland and/or water;
- Pre-1960s detached buildings and structures within 200m of woodland and/or water;
- Pre-1914 buildings within 400m of woodland and/or water;
- Pre-1914 buildings with gable ends or slate roofs regardless of location;

Bat Emergence Surveys and Re-Entry Surveys

2.4 Activity surveys were carried out by Dr Jonty Denton at dusk on the on 6th May, 4th June, and 1st July 2024.

2.5 During the surveys, all activity including emergence points from the building were recorded. The surveys followed BCT guidelines (Collins 2023). Prior to the surveys the building was inspected externally in order to assess features of interest and all potential exit locations. Surveyors were positioned in such a way in order to cover all potential openings into the property and record any flyovers and activity around the building.

2.6 Dusk emergence surveys started 30 minutes before sunset and observations were maintained until 90 minutes after sunset. Bats usually emerge about twenty minutes after sunset depending on the species, light level, weather conditions and time of year. Peak

activity will normally last for about two hours after sunset, during times of peak insect activity.

- 2.7 All surveyors were equipped with full spectrum bat detectors and Canon camcorders with IR illumination. The positions of these are shown in Figure 2.

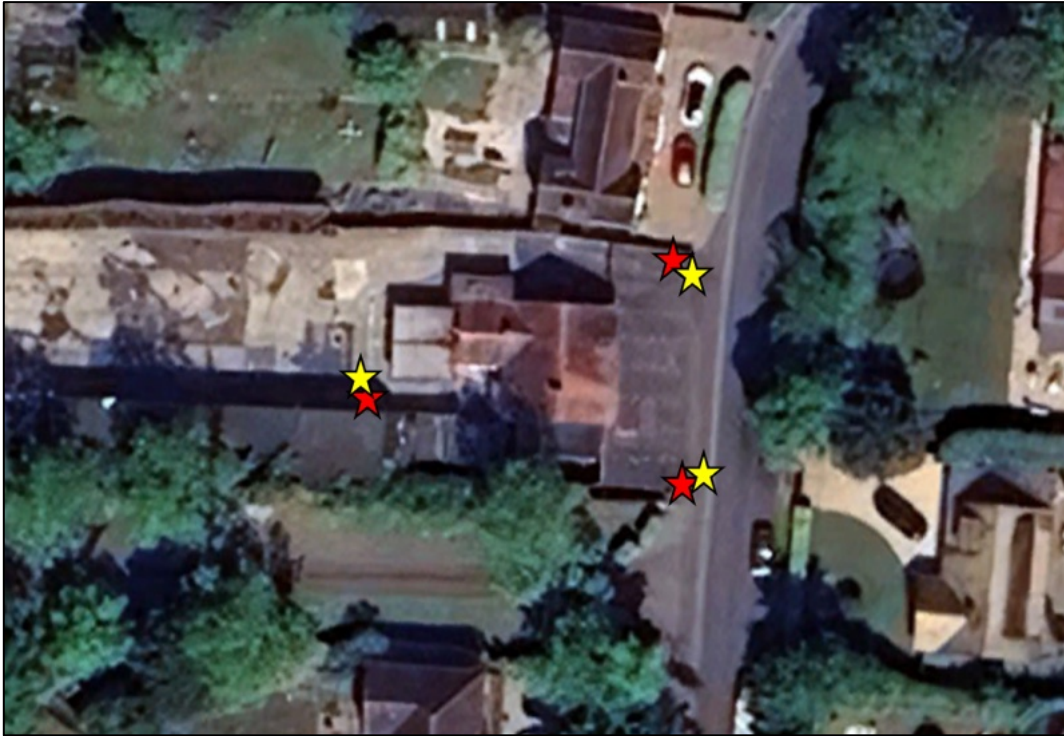


Figure 2. Location of surveyors (red stars) and cameras yellow stars)

3.0 RESULTS

Internal and External Building Inspections

- 3.1 The site contained a residential bungalow and storage structures. The storage structures were open fronted and contained no features that were considered to have suitability to support roosting bats. Soprano pipistrelle droppings were identified within the loft void

of the bungalow, and external features such as lifted roof tiles were identified on the external of the building.

Emergence Surveys

3.2 Dusk emergence surveys were undertaken on the 5th May, 4th June and 1st July 2024. No bats were recorded emerging on any of the three surveys. Low numbers of common and soprano pipistrelles were recorded commuting across the site.

3.3 The detailed survey results are given in **Appendix 1**.

4.0 DISCUSSION

Implications for the Development

4.1 No bats were recorded emerging from the building during the surveys, but a low number of soprano pipistrelle droppings were identified within the loft void of the bungalow during the PRA. Approximately 10 droppings were identified scattered through the loft void, which suggests this was not a maternity roost.

4.2 The proposals are for the demolition and replacement of the existing residential dwelling, and the construction of a community church hall.

4.3 This will impact on the historical soprano pipistrelle roost identified within the building, and a low impact licence will be required from Natural England to legalise the loss of a bat roost and ensure mitigation and compensation measures are implemented.

4.4 These surveys are currently out of date and will be repeated during the 2026 survey season. If bats are recorded emerging from the building during these surveys, new mitigation will be created.

New Roost Creation

4.5 Prior to any works a bat box must be established onsite. These provide alternative roosting habitat throughout the year for the species which have been recorded utilising the building.

- 4.6 One bat box, the Improved Cavity Bat Box (shown in Figure 3 below) should be established within the site. These are suitable for the smaller British bats, including soprano pipistrelles.



Figure 4: The improved cavity bat box to be established on site

Timing and General Working Practices

- 4.7 The method statement of works would include the following:
- i.* Toolbox talk
 - ii.* Careful removal of roof tiles and lap planking in areas affected.
 - iii.* Careful removal and relocation of any roosting bats uncovered to the bat boxes.
 - iv.* Common pipistrelles increasingly utilise summer roosts as hibernation sites so it is possible, they may be present year-round. Therefore, no removal of northern and northeast facing tiles when temperatures fall below 5 degrees at night for more than 5 days.

Lighting

- 4.8 New exterior lighting should be avoided, but if necessary for security purposes, then the latest updated lighting guidance note (GN08/23) should be followed. This is available at Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting | Institution of Lighting Professionals (theilp.org.uk) and supersedes all previous guidance.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 A preliminary roost assessment of the site in 2023 found soprano pipistrelle droppings in the loft void of the bungalow onsite. Roughly 10 droppings were identified, which suggests a low number of bats were using the space.
- 5.2 Emergence surveys undertaken in 2024 recorded no emergences from the building.
- 5.3 The proposed works would result in the loss of the historical soprano pipistrelle roost. This would require a license from Natural England. One improved cavity bat box will be established onsite before the works commence, and will stay in-situ as compensation for the roost lost onsite. New exterior lighting should be avoided, or be bat-friendly.
- 5.4 The emergence surveys will be repeated during the 2026 survey season, and if any bats are recorded emerging from the building, new mitigation measures will be required.

6.0 REFERENCES

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

Internet resources:

Google Maps: www.maps.google.co.uk

Magic Interactive Map: www.magic.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Raw Data

Project	19 Grovelands	Start time	20.00	Finish	22.05	14.5 C at start 13 C at finish
	JD RD HD	5.5.24		sunset	20.33	Weather 90% cloud beaufort 0
Bat passes heard						
Station no.	Start time		No.	passes	comments	
NW, NE, SE	20.50	Soprano pipistrelle	1	1	Emerged from rear of no.21 and flew southeast	
SW, SE	20.59	Common pipistrelle	1	1	Emerged from rear of no.19 and flew southeast	

Project	19 Grovelands	Start time	20.40	Finish	22.45	16 C at start 14.5 C at finish
	JD RD HD	4.6.24		sunset	21.14	Weather 90% cloud beaufort sharp shower at 21.20-25
Bat passes heard						
Station no.	Start time		No.	passes	comments	
NW, NE, SE	21.29	Common pipistrelle	1	1	Flew in from north circling in yard including entering open fronted sheds (see flightpath C on fig 1	
SW, SE	21.33	Common pipistrelle	1	1	Flew north along Grovelands lane	

Project	19 Grovelands	Start time	20.40	Finish	22.53	17 C at start 16 C at finish
	JD RD HD	1.7.24		sunset	21.23	Weather 100% cloud beaufort 0 light drizzle at 21.23-27
Bat passes heard						
Station no.	Start time		No.	passes	comments	
SE, SW	21.44	Noctule	1	1	High pass to west of plot	
SW	21.45	Common pipistrelle	1	1	Flew in from east and away to west up cemetery lane (flightpath C on fig 1)	
SW	22.02	Common pipistrelle	1	1	HNS	

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