

November 2013

**TWICKENHAM FORMER SORTING OFFICE, LONDON
(ECO2720)****2013 Update Bat Survey - Summary Report**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Summary Report has been produced by Aspect Ecology for St James Group Ltd. in respect of site surveys for potential roosting activity by bats at the Former Sorting Office site in Twickenham, London. These surveys are part of the precautionary mitigation to ensure that no bats are harmed during the planned demolition works at the site.
- 1.2. The surveys described in this current report were commissioned to provide updated survey results, as the results from 2010 and 2012 are considered unreliable due to the time that had elapsed and the continuing potential for bats to have subsequently adopted roost sites in the buildings.

2. METHODS & SCOPE OF WORK

- 2.1. All working methods were guided by published best practice guidance¹ combined with the experience of the project manager and lead surveyor.
- 2.2. Site surveys were undertaken on 26th-27th September, in good weather conditions: AT DUSK: dry and calm to moderate wind (BF 1 – 3), with partial cloud (20-40%) and temperature 16°C at start and 10°C at end; AT DAWN: dry and calm to moderate wind (BF 0 – 2), with partial cloud (0-40%) and temperature 10°C throughout.
- 2.3. **Inspection Survey**
- 2.4. All buildings were subject to internal and external inspection surveys using ladders, torches, inspection mirrors, endoscope and binoculars where necessary to check for potential bat use. Evidence of the presence of bats was searched for with particular attention paid to any loft voids and gaps between rafters and beams. Specific searches were made for corpses or bat droppings that can indicate present or past use and the extent of use, whilst other signs that can indicate the possible presence of bats were also searched for, e.g. presence of stained areas, cobweb-free timbers/crevices, or feeding remains.

¹ Hundt, L. (2012) *Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines*, BCT;
Mitchell-Jones A.M. (2004) *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*, Natural England

Access was made available to all buildings. All parts of the buildings were accessed as far as was safe and practicable.

2.5. Dusk Emergence

2.6. Six surveyors were stationed singly around the site so as to observe all necessary aspects of each building, recording from sunset (18:49) until 2 hours after sunset, when surveyors regrouped and pooled data. Broad-spectrum bat detectors² were used by each surveyor to monitor for bats' ultrasound calls, with output recorded for later analysis as necessary, while the visually scanned the area for bats. Surveyors were positioned around the buildings to minimise the potential for any potential access/egress point to be missed: to west of B1; between B1 and B2a; at south-east corner of B2b; to south and to north of B3; and on the sports pitch north of B2.

2.7. Dawn Re-entry Survey

2.8. Staff deployed in the same locations as for the dusk survey commencing survey 2 hours before sunrise and concluding at sunrise (06:55).

3. RESULTS

3.1. Internal and External Buildings Inspection

3.2. Inspection Survey

Building surveys confirmed the results of previous inspection surveys in 2010, finding no evidence of use by roosting bats. The inspections also identified the combination of construction design, materials and condition as offering very little potential opportunity for use by roosting bats. Buildings 1, 2a, 2b, 2c and B4 had negligible potential to support roosting bats, and Building 3 had a low to negligible potential to support roosting bats.

3.3. Dusk Emergence

3.4. Dusk. No bats were observed to emerge from any of the buildings.


A small number of pipistrelles were foraging around the floodlights at the sports pitches; occasional bats moved between the semi-natural areas to west and south of the site, near B1. Three Common Pipistrelle passes and one Soprano Pipistrelle pass were observed by B2/B2a, with a movement from south of B2a to the north-west and towards the River Crane.

From between buildings B2b, B3, B4, frequent to constant foraging was observed by Common Pipistrelle. This bat activity was concentrated around the river and the sports pitch lights. Activity was recorded here from roughly 25 minutes after sunset for over an hour, though no activity was noted for last 30 minutes of survey.

3.5. Dawn Re-entry Survey

3.6. Dawn. No bats were observed to swarm at or enter any of the buildings; overall activity levels were very low, with no foraging around the woodland, river or sports pitch. There were two single Common Pipistrelle passes at 5:50

² Batbox Duet frequency division bat detectors, saving to mp3 recording devices.



and 6:10 to the south of B2a but no other bat passes were observed or recorded by the surveyors.

4. EVALUATION

- 4.1. In summary, no roosting bats were observed on the site during the visual inspection survey, and no bat droppings or other signs were found which would suggest use of these buildings by roosting bats.
- 4.2. That bats were observed so early at dusk suggests that a common pipistrelle roost lies within a few hundred metres of this point, but in such an urban environment there are many hundreds of potential crevices which could house such a roost.
- 4.3. The majority of bat activity was observed to the north of the site, over the River Crane and the wooded area, as well as at the lights of the all-weather sports pitches. The level of bat activity recorded on site during 2013 was broadly similar to that recorded during the surveys in June-July 2012, and July 2010. The majority of bat activity was observed to occur outside the site boundary.
- 4.4. Overall, the site is considered unlikely to be used by roosting bats and thus to be of negligible conservation significance, in accordance with the Bat Mitigation Guidelines. However, given the structure of the buildings it is not possible to guarantee that no bats would ever roost on site; there are potentially suitable crevices that could offer minor potential to shelter single or small numbers of bats. It is considered from the type of construction and location of the site that any potential use would most likely be by single Common Pipistrelle bats.
- 4.5. Demolition of such structures can take place without need for licencing, as there is, on balance, no reasonable likelihood of committing an offence.
- 4.6. A precautionary Method Statement has been produced (see Appendix 1) and will guide mitigation in the unlikely event that one or more bats are found during demolition work.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1. The site continues to have some low levels of activity by common and widespread bat species, with Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle both recorded. As previously, the bat activity was largely recorded at the areas of semi-natural habitat to the north and west of site, and at the sports pitch floodlighting, with occasional passes across the site or between buildings. No evidence was found of bats having used the buildings for roosting, and the site remains of negligible potential value for roosting bats.

Appendix 1 NON-LICENSED BAT METHOD STATEMENT

Natural England's guidance document states that "if the consultant ecologist, on the basis of survey information and specialist knowledge of the species concerned, considers that on balance the proposed activity is **reasonably unlikely** to result in an offence under Regulation 41 then no licence is required. However, in these circumstances Natural England would urge that reasonable precautions be taken to avoid affecting EPS during works, and that an audit trail is kept on the decision making process."

This Method Statement is provided as an aid to provision of appropriate 'reasonable precautions' in respect of the potential for offences relating to disturbance, harm or killing of bats, or disturbance or destruction of their roosts at the Former Sorting Office, Twickenham, where the consultant considers on the above basis that such offences are reasonably unlikely.

<p>ON-SITE CONTRACTORS' GUIDANCE - What To Do If You Find A Bat</p> <p>If a bat is discovered during any of the unsupervised works, work will cease immediately; Aspect Ecology will be called for advice. This advice will include leaving the bat to disperse of its own accord, while if possible works will progress at a different location, or waiting for the ecologist to arrive and, if appropriate, to move the bat. <u>Builders and contractors are explicitly forbidden from handling bats.</u></p> <p>If in doubt cease work and consult with Aspect Ecology.</p>

Please sign and print names of **all** attending parties.

Signature & Name	Company	Role	Date

(continue on another sheet if necessary)