

EXTENDED PHASE 1 ECOLOGICAL AND BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT

SEVENOAKS, 101A HIGH STREET, HAMPTON, TW12 2SX

FINAL REPORT

September 2024

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Report conditions

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Written by	Connor Hill	Date	12/07/2024
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Executive Summary

- This extended phase 1 ecological and bat roost assessment report has been prepared in order to support a planning application for the proposed demolition and construction works at Sevenoaks, Hampton.
- An extended phase 1 ecological assessment of the application site was undertaken on the 27th June 2024 by Connor Hill of Phillips Ecology.
- The survey area comprised the entirety of the house and two outbuildings and any adjacent site grounds to be impacted by the proposals. A data search extended to a 2km radius for designated sites and a 1km radius for notable habitats and protected species.
- The site is considered to support opportunities for protected and priority species including bats, breeding birds, reptiles, badgers and hedgehog. The existing house was considered to support high suitability for roosting bats. This assessment was based on the large numbers of gaps under the roof tiles on the building.
- In order to confirm the presence/absence of roosting bats, characterise any bat roosts, assess the extent that they may be affected by the proposed works and develop a proportionate and appropriate mitigation strategy, further survey work in accordance with Natural England standing advice and the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition) was undertaken for the house. The recommended survey effort for structures with high roost suitability is three presence/absence surveys.
- Three emergence surveys were carried out during July, August and September 2024.
- The surveys have confirmed that the house supports a soprano pipistrelle bat day roost. No further bat roosts were recorded during the surveys.
- The proposed demolition will result in the destruction of the identified soprano pipistrelle bat day roost. As such, a European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licence will be required to enable the development to proceed lawfully under a derogation from the Habitat Regulations 2017. The site falls within the remit of the Bat Mitigation Class Licence.
- A mitigation strategy has been designed that would ensure the maintenance of the favourable conservation status of bats. In summary, this comprises the provision of replacement roost opportunities which are proportionate to the scale of impact and the removal of roost features by hand, under the supervision of a licenced bat worker to ensure that individual bats are not killed or injured.
- No further surveys are required for the two outbuildings, which support negligible suitability for roosting bats.



- With the implementation of precautionary construction avoidance measures, impacts on designated sites and further protected species will be avoided.
- Information regarding the length of time the findings from this report are valid for can be found in section 13.



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1. Introduction

1.1 **Report purpose**

This report has been prepared in order to present the extended phase 1 ecological and bat roost assessment undertaken at Sevenoaks, Hampton (central grid reference: TQ 14164 70007).

1.2 **Description of proposal**

The proposals include the demolition of the existing house and outbuildings on site and erection of one detached dwelling.

1.3 Report context

Holland and Green have prepared a planning application on behalf of their client (the applicant) for the proposed works at Sevenoaks. Phillips Ecology have been instructed by the Applicant to undertake an ecological assessment to support this application, which will be submitted to London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames.

1.4 Scope of assessment

An extended phase 1 ecological assessment was carried out on the 27th June 2024. The survey comprised a field survey and desktop study in order to identify notable or protected sites, habitats or species potentially affected by the proposal under consideration. This was followed by species specific surveys for bats.

1.5 Survey area

The survey area comprised the house, two outbuildings and the grounds on the property within the redline boundary.

Regarding the bat roost assessment, the survey area extended to all areas of the buildings that will be modified by the proposed works in such a way that bats, or their roosts could be impacted (directly or indirectly). Therefore, the survey included the entirety of all the buildings.

A data search extended to a 2km radius for designated sites and a 1km radius for notable habitats and protected species.

1.6 Limitations

Limitations which are specific to each phase of the assessment are given in the relevant sections, below.



2. Data search

2.1 Methodology

A desk-based assessment was undertaken by Phillips Ecology on the 10th July 2024 with Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC). The MAGIC database was consulted for records of statutory designated sites within a 2km radius of the site and priority habitats and protected species licenses granted within a 1km radius.

2.2 Limitations

The data search results are bound by the following statement contained within MAGICs general disclaimer: "The materials contained on this website are of a general, informational, nature. We have used reasonable endeavours to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the contents of the pages on this site but the information does not constitute advice and must not be relied on as such."

2.3 Results

2.3.1 Statutory designated sites

A total of four statutory sites, being two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Ramsar and a Special Protection Area (SPA) are located within a 2km radius of the site. Details for the site designations are detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Statutory designated sites with	thin 2km of the application site
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Site Name	Approx. distance and direction from the site	Reason for designation
Kempton Park SSSI & South West London Waterbodies Ramsar & SPA	1.9km W	A small section of the extensive South West London Waterbodies network is located within a 2km radius of the site comprising only the Red House Reservoir. The site is designated SPA and Ramsar as it used by an average of 710 wintering individuals of Gadwall <i>Anas strepera</i> (2.4% NW Europe population) and 853 wintering individuals of Shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i> (2.1% NW/Central Europe population). Kempton Park SSSI also encompasses Red House Reservoir. The site is of significant importance for other wintering wading birds in addition to the species mentioned above. The recorded species include lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> , redshank <i>Tringa botanus</i> , ringed plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> , and little ringed plover <i>Charadrius dubius</i> . The reserviour is still operational as a water storage facility and the secluded wooded setting is frequently used by foraging bat species including noctule <i>Nyctalus noctule</i> , serotine <i>Eptesicus</i> <i>serotinus</i> , Daubenton's bat <i>Myotis daubentoni</i> and pipistrelle <i>pipistrellus</i> .
Bushy Park and Home Park SSSI	30m E	The site is of special interest due to its nationally important saproxylic (dead wood associated) invertebrate assemblage, population of veteran trees and acid grassland. The site is



situated on the floodplains of the River Thames. The land was enclosed in the early 16th century.

In addition to saproxylic invertebrates the site is also known to support a significant number of nationally scarce beetles including Aeletes atomarius, Stenichnus godarti, Trichonyx sulcicollis, Velleius dilatatus, Aplocnemus impressus, Diplocoelus fagi, Teredus cylindricus, Scraptia fuscula etc.

2.3.2 Ancient woodlands

There are no compartments of ancient woodland located within a 1km radius of the application site.

2.3.3 *Priority habitats*

The data search revealed the following priority habitats within 1km of the application site:

- Good quality semi-improved grassland (non priority)
- Priority deciduous woodland
- Traditional orchards
- Woodpasture and parkland

2.3.4 Protected Species

The data search revealed there are no records of the protected species within a 1km radius of the application site.



3. Habitats

3.1 Methodology

A field survey was carried out on the 27th June 2024 by Connor Hill of Phillips Ecology. During the survey, all broad habitat types were identified, and a list was compiled of characteristic plant species within each habitat type. These habitats are described below in accordance with UKHabs terminology.

3.2 Limitations

No limitations were encountered throughout the duration of the survey.

3.3 Existing records

The data search revealed that priority habitats associated with the local landscape within 1km of the site comprise, good quality semi-improved grassland (non priority), deciduous woodland, traditional orchards and woodpasture and parkland.

3.4 Results

The site consists of habitats typical of a garden environment including a managed lawn, ornamental planting, hedgerows, scattered trees, hardstanding and scrub. The house is located roughly in the centre of the site with the first outbuilding located to the southwest of the house and the second outbuilding located in the south-western corner of the site. A driveway extends from the north-eastern corner where the gate entrance is situated terminating at the front of the house. Modified grassland forms much of the site around the driveway and in the rear garden with scattered trees extending along both sides of the entrance driveway. A mix of native and ornamental planting extends around the eastern, southern and part of the western site boundary. The site is enclosed partly in a stone/brick-built wall and partly in wooden fencing.

The site is situated in an urban environment with residential dwellings and associated gardens surrounding the property on all sides. Further afield, Bushy Park is located to the east of the site comprising a mosaic of habitats including the Longford River, blocks of woodland, mature hedgerows and parkland.

The following UKHabs types were recorded within the application site. See Appendix 2 for the UKHabs habitat map.

3.4.1 *Modified grassland g4*

All of the grassland located on site comprises well managed modified grassland. Lawn areas are located on both sides of the entrance driveway and in the rear garden of the house (Figures 1 and 2). A typical 1x1m quadrat area of the grassland included, perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and white clover *Trifolium repens*. Other species recorded within the grassland included, common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* and ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*.





Figure 1 – grassland in the north of the site



Figure 2 - grassland in the south of the site

3.4.2 Scattered trees g4 11

A mix of native and ornamental trees are located on site. A line of mature oak *Quercus robur* trees extends from north to south down the centre of the site north of the house. The remaining trees are located roughly around the boundary of the site. The recorded tree species in addition to the aforementioned oak trees included sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, yew *Taxus baccata*, lime *Tilia cordata x platyphyllos*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, beech *Fagus sylvatica*, cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*, spotted laurel *Aucuba japonica*, Leyland cypress *Cupressus x leylandii*, bamboo *bambusa vulgaris*, palm sp. *Arecaceae sp.,* box *Buxus sempervirens*, pine sp. *Pinus*, sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa,* magnolia sp *Magnolia sp.*, and Japanese cherry *Prunus sakura*.



Figure 3 - line of oak trees in the north of the site



Figure 4 – sweet chestnut and palm trees in the south of the site

3.4.3 Other hedgerow h2b

Two hedgerows dominated by yew are present to the northwest of the house. The first lies adjacent to the northern elevation of the house and the second partly extends along the western boundary.

3.4.4 Scattered scrub u1c 10 and Introduced shrub u1d 1160

Ornamental planting extends around all of the boundaries on site in both the front and rear gardens. The shrubbery is mostly non-native with interspersed native scrub species mixed in. The native species included meadow crane's-bill *Geranium pratense*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and holly *Ilex aquifolium*.





Figure 5 – ornamental planting along the southern boundary



Figure 6 – ornamental planting along the eastern boundary

3.4.5 Buildings u1b5

The application site contains four built structures. The house and two rear outbuildings will be directly impacted by the works and are described further in section 5. The fourth structure comprises a small wooden shed in the north of the site.

3.4.6 Other developed land u1b6 and artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface u1c

A large driveway extends from the gate entrance in the northeast of the site through the site and terminates north of the house. A patio extends around the perimeter of the house. Bare ground is present beneath the ornamental planting around the boundary of the site and surrounds the two outbuildings where the planting is sparce.



Figure 7- north-eastern driveway entrance

3.5 Assessment

Overall, the native yew hedgerows and trees on site are considered to be of high botanical value within the context of the site. The other trees, although non-native and of low intrinsic value, do offer some ecological value for breeding birds.

The remaining habitats on site consist of buildings, hardstanding, managed grassland and introduced shrub. These habitats contain no significant assemblages of species that are of high ecological value.



4. Protected and notable species assessment

The scope of works, data search and habitat assessment have informed the scope of the protected and notable species assessment. On this basis, the following protected and priority species have been considered further within this report:

- Bats
- Badger
- Hazel dormouse
- Hedgehog
- Reptiles
- Great crested newt
- Breeding birds

The surveyed site has been assessed for its potential to support the above-named protected species based upon the criteria in Table 2.

Grading criteria	Justification
Negligible	Site is entirely unsuitable for species. Presence of species highly unlikely.
Low Potential	Minimal suitable habitat present or, if present, highly degraded/fragmented. Minimal linkage to suitable habitat beyond site. Presence of species unlikely.
Moderate	Presence of some suitable habitat features for species. Surveyed site within/close to known range or known occurrence but factors such as isolation/fragmentation may reduce potential. Presence of species is more likely than not.
High	Presence of optimal habitat features for species. Surveyed site within known range/close to known occurrence. Excellent connectivity to optimal habitat. No justification for discounting presence of species.
Confirmed	Species confirmed on site through direct sighting, presence of field signs
presence	(e.g. scat, hair, prints, nest, eggs, habitation etc.) or through desk-based assessment.

Table 2 Protected species grading criteria

5. Preliminary bat roost assessment

5.1 Methodology



The survey did not depart from the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition) which states that "A preliminary roost inspection survey is a detailed inspection of the exterior and interior of a structure to look for features that bats could use for entry/exit and roosting and to search for signs of bats".

The external features of the built structures which will be modified by the proposed works in such a way that bats or their roosts could be impacted (directly or indirectly) if present, were systematically inspected in detail to compile information on potential and actual bat access points and roosting places such as lifted or broken tiles, loose brickwork and open eaves. This included a thorough search for evidence of bat activity such as bat droppings, urine splashes and fur staining.

The interiors of the buildings were inspected in order to identify potential or actual access points and roosting places and to record any evidence of bat activity or bats themselves.

5.2 Survey equipment

Survey equipment comprised:

- High-powered torch
 Ladders
- Camera
 Binoculars

5.3 Limitations

Due to the limited size of the roof void a small section was inaccessible to be inspected for evidence of roosting bats. No other limitations were encountered throughout the duration of the survey. Despite this limitation it is still believed that a robust assessment of the building's suitability for roosting bats was completed.

5.4 Assessment methodology

The suitability of the buildings for supporting bat roosts will be assessed against the guidelines within Table 3 which have been adapted from the BCT Good Practice Guidelines.

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Suitability	Description of Roosting Habitats
Negligible	Structure has no reasonable likelihood of supporting roosting bats i.e. no suitable roosting features present.
Low	A structure which could be used opportunistically by individual bats i.e. one or more potential roost sites which do not provide sufficient space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions (e.g. temperature, light, humidity) and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats.
Moderate	A structure which could be used by bats but is not likely to support a roost of high conservation status (e.g. maternity roost). This structure

Table 3 Building suitability assessment guidelines



would support features which exhibit suitable size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat for roosting bats.

High

A structure which is obviously suitable for supporting larger numbers of bats, on a regular basis and for longer periods of time.

The site's suitability for supporting commuting and foraging bats will be assessed against the guidelines within Table 4 which have been adapted from the BCT Good Practice Guidelines.

Suitability	Description of Foraging/Commuting Habitats
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats.
Low	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats such as a gappy hedgerow or un-vegetated stream, but isolated i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitats.
	Suitable but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting such as lines and scrub or linked back gardens.
	Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such tree, scrub, grassland or water.
High	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of tree and woodland edge.
	High quality habitat that Is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland.
	Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

 Table 4 Foraging/commuting suitability assessment guidelines

5.5 **Results**



5.5.1 The House

The building comprises a two-storey brick-built structure which rises to a multi-pitched, hipped and gable end roof design clad with clay roof, ridge and hip tiles. The house is oriented north to south. A two-storey hipped extension protrudes from the western elevation of the main house with a second gable end extension adjoining the western elevation. The eaves extend beyond their wall plates and remain exposed with wooden underboards infilling the gaps between them. A hipped dormer window is situated on the northern roof face and a flat roofed dormer protrudes from the southern roof face; both are clad with clay hanging tiles on their respective elevations. A wooden framed conservatory set on a brick plinth adjoins the rear of the house. The windows and doors are set in wooden frames which are tight fitting to the surrounding brickwork.

Internally, the roof of the main house is vaulted. A single half-height roof void is present in the western hipped extension. The space is lined with breathable lining on the roof and fibreglass insulation on the floor. Minimal cobwebbing is present with the extension being a recent addition to the main house constructed in 2008.



Figure 8 – northern elevation of the house



Figure 9 – southern elevation of the house with dormer window and conservatory



Figure 10 - western hipped extension



Figure 11 – half-height roof void inside the hipped extension



An account of suitable access/egress features and recorded evidence of bat activity is given in table 5.

	Suitability	Evidence
Exterior	The following suitable access/egress and roosting features were recorded externally:	No evidence of roosting activity was recorded on the external elevations of the building during the survey.
	- Multiple crevices are present under the roof tiles where they are either lifted or have slipped away on all roof faces (Figure 12).	
	- Gaps are located under the corner hanging tiles on the dormer windows.	
	- Gaps in the eaves between the wooden underboards and wall plate (mostly cobwebbed but some remain open).	
	- Crevices are present under the ridge and hip tiles on the house (Figure 13).	
	- Crevices exist in the timber framework on the exterior of the building (Figure 14).	
Interior	The following suitable access/egress and roosting features were recorded internally during the survey:	No evidence of roosting activity was recorded internally during the survey.
	- The roof void overall is suitable for bats, however, the breathable lining inside the western extension has the potential injure/kill bats attempting to roost inside the void.	





Figure 12 – lifted roof tiles on the southern roof face



 $\label{eq:Figure 13} \textbf{Figure 13} - \textbf{missing mortar under the hip tiles on} \\ the western extension$



Figure 14 – gaps between the timber work and wall plate

5.5.2 The northernmost outbuilding

The outbuilding comprises a single-storey wooden built structure with a flat roof covered in a thin layer of moss and vegetation (Figures 15 and 16). The structure is oriented east to west. The elevations are formed with wooden boarding and metal encloses the eaves.

Internally, there is no roof void present.



Figure 15 – south-eastern corner of the outbuilding



Figure 16 - northern elevation of the outbuilding



An account of suitable access/egress features and recorded evidence of bat activity inside the zone of impact is given in table 6.

	Suitability	Evidence	
Exterior	No suitable access/egress and	No evidence of roosting activity was	
	roosting features were recorded	recorded on the external elevations of	
	externally.	the building during the survey.	
Interior	The following suitable access/egress	The following evidence of roosting	
	and roosting features were recorded	activity was recorded internally during	
	internally during the survey.	the survey.	
	N/A	N/A	
	·		

5.5.3 The southernmost outbuilding

The southern outbuilding comprises a single-storey block-built structure with a monopitched roof covered with roofing felt (Figure 17). The structure is oriented north to south. The elevations are clad with wooden shiplap boarding. The eaves are enclosed with wooden fascia boards and closely adjoining uPVC guttering.

Internally, there is a small roof void (Figure 18). The space is unlined with the undersides of the wooden roof panelling exposed and is mostly filled with fibreglass insulation. Where the void is not filled with insulation the areas are heavily cobwebbed.



Figure 17 – northern elevation of the outbuilding



Figure 18 – fiberglass insulation infilling the void space



An account of suitable access/egress features and recorded evidence of bat activity inside the zone of impact is given in table 7.

Table 7 – The northernmost outbuilding's recorded features and ad	ctivitv
	Juvicy

	Suitability	Evidence		
Exterior	The following suitable access/egress	No evidence of roosting activity was		
	and roosting features were recorded	recorded on the external elevations of		
	externally:	the building during the survey.		
	- Gaps are present under the wooden fascia boards however these are heavily cobwebbed.			
Interior	No suitable access/egress and roosting features were recorded internally during the survey.	No evidence of roosting activity was recorded internally during the survey.		

5.5.4 Site grounds relevant to bats

The site grounds that will be directly impacted by the proposed works include the buildings, lawns, ornamental planting and hardstanding. These habitats offer little in the way of foraging resource for bats, however, the trees and hedgerows on site in conjunction with the nearby river and parkland are considered to be suitable for foraging and commuting bats. Due to this, it is likely that bats will commute and forage through the site.

5.6 Assessment

When considered in view of the criteria set out in Table 3, the house is considered to support high suitability for roosting bats - i.e. A structure which is obviously suitable for supporting larger numbers of bats, on a regular basis and for longer periods of time.

The two outbuildings are considered to support negligible suitability for roosting bats i.e. A structure which has no reasonable likelihood of supporting roosting bats.

In the context of the wider landscape, the habitats within the footprint of the proposal are considered unexceptional for foraging and commuting bats. They are, nevertheless, suitable for commuting and foraging bats and it is likely that bats will commute and forage through the site as a compartment of their wider foraging range in the landscape.

6. Bat Emergence Survey

6.1 Methodology

The emergence surveys were undertaken in accordance Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). Five surveyors with Night Vision Aids (NVAs) were positioned in order to provide sufficient coverage of the identified suitable roost features when stationary. All emergences, reentries and general activity were recorded during the course of the surveys. Recordings



were later analysed using Kaleidoscope bat call analysis software to confirm species identification.

6.1.1 Surveyor/s

The surveys were led by Duncan Gilmartin supported by suitably experienced bat surveyors Jackie Kirby, Hetty Wakeford, Lucie Poole, Chris Drake and Laura Baynes.

6.1.2 Survey area

The survey area comprised the entirety of the dwelling. This enabled survey coverage of all suitable access/egress and roosting features which were recorded during the preliminary bat roost assessment and set out in tables 6.

6.1.3 Survey date

The date and timings of the emergence surveys are presented in Table 8. The emergence surveys commenced 15 minutes prior to sunset and continued for at least 1.5 hours

Survey type	Date	Start	Finish	Sunset/sunrise
Emergence	30/07/2024	20:40	22:25	20:51
Emergence	22/08/2024	19:55	21:40	20:10
Emergence	12/09/2024	19:01	20:54	19:24

Table 8 survey date and timings

6.1.4 Survey equipment

Survey equipment comprised:

- Echometer Touch 2 Pros
 Infrared illuminators
- Sony FDR-AX53 video cameras (nightshot mode)

6.1.5 Weather conditions

Weather conditions during the surveys are provided in Table 9:

Table 9 emergence weather conditions

Survey	Date	Precipitation		Temperature		Wind		Cloud Cover	
		Start	Finish	Start	Finish	Start	Finish	Start	Finish
Emergence	30/07/2024	Nil	Nil	25.0°C	22.0°C	BF 2	BF 2	0%	10%
Emergence	22/08/2024	Nil	Nil	19.0°C	18.0°C	BF 1	BF 2	100%	100%
Emergence	12/09/2024	Nil	Nil	12.0°C	11.0°C	BF 1	BF 1	100%	0%



6.2 **Results**

6.2.1 Visit 1 – 30th July 2024 – Dusk Emergence Survey

During the course of the emergence survey carried out on the 30th July 2024 no bats were recorded emerging from the property. The first recorded bat comprised a noctule *Nyctalus noctula* was recorded commuting high over the site at 21:09. At 21:11, two common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* bats and one soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* bat were recorded foraging within the canopy of the trees to the north of the house. Activity in this location was constant for the first half of the survey, with activity reducing after 21:48. A single soprano pipistrelle bat was recorded on three further occasions, 21:59, 22:14 and 22:21. No further activity was recorded during the course of the survey.

6.2.2 Visit 2 – 22nd August 2024 – Dusk Emergence Survey

During the course of the emergence survey carried out on the 22nd August 2024, a single bat was recorded emerging from the house. This comprised a soprano pipistrelle bat which emerged from a gap within the wooden cross beam on the eastern elevation of the house at 20:11. Following the emergence, a single soprano pipistrelle bat was recorded foraging in the distance at 20:31 and 20:35. At 20:36, a soprano pipistrelle bat was recorded foraging within the canopy of the trees within the front and rear gardens. This activity continued until 20:52, with up to two soprano pipistrelle bats recorded at any one time. At 20:49, a serotine *Eptesicus serotinus* was recorded foraging briefly in the distance.no bats were recorded emerging from the property. Individual soprano pipistrelle and common pipistrelle bats were recorded on four further occasions, foraging on a loop between the trees canopies within the site and adjacent gardens until the end of the survey.

6.2.3 Visit 3 – 12th September 2024 – Dusk Emergence Survey

During the course of the emergence survey carried out on the 12th September 2024, a single bat was recorded emerging from the house. This comprised a soprano pipistrelle bat which emerged from a gap within the wooden cross beam on the eastern elevation of the house at 19:38. Following the emergence, a single soprano pipistrelle bat and a single common pipistrelle bat were recorded foraging in the distance from 19:55 until 20:26. At 20:31, a soprano pipistrelle bat was recorded exhibiting song-flight behaviour to the east of the property and at 20:32, a second soprano pipistrelle bat joined the first. Following this, individual soprano pipistrelle bats were recorded foraging in the distance at 20:35 and 20:54.

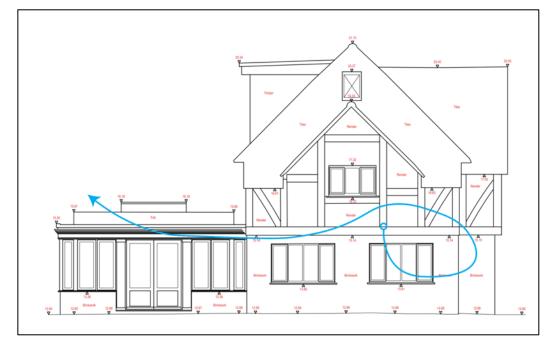


Figure 19 – soprano pipistrelle bat emergence and flight path on the eastern elevation of the house.

6.3 Assessment

The emergence surveys completed during July, August and September 2024 have confirmed that the house supports a single soprano pipistrelle day roost in a timber crevice on the eastern elevation of the house.

7. Bats - trees

7.1 Methodology

The survey did not depart from the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition) which states that "A preliminary ground level roost assessment of a tree is a detailed inspection of the exterior of the tree from ground level to look for features that bats could use for roosting (Potential Roost Features (PRFs)".

The exterior of the trees that could be impacted (directly or indirectly), were systematically inspected in detail to compile information on potential and actual PRFs such as woodpecker holes, rot holes, partially detached bark and partially detached ivy with stem diameters over 50mm. The survey included a thorough search for evidence of bat activity such as bat droppings and fur staining.

7.2 Survey equipment

Survey equipment comprised:

- High-powered torch
- Camera

- Ladder
- Binoculars



7.3 Limitations

Limitations were not encountered during the course of the survey.

7.4 Assessment methodology

Suitability

The suitability of the trees for supporting bat roosts will be assessed against the guidelines within Table 7 which have been adapted from the BCT Good Practice Guidelines.

Table 7 Suitability assessment guidelines - trees

Description of Roosting Habitats

Negligible	Tree has no reasonable likelihood of supporting roosting bats i.e. no suitable roosting features present.
Low	A tree of sufficient size and age to contain potential roost features but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roost potential.
Moderate	A tree which could be used by bats but is not likely to support a roost of high conservation status (e.g. maternity roost). This structure would support features which exhibit suitable size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat for roosting bats.
High	A tree which is obviously suitable for supporting larger numbers of bats, on a regular basis and for longer periods of time.

7.5 **Results**

No native trees are anticipated to be removed in the current proposals. The only trees that are anticipated to be removed are the palm trees which currently surround the existing northern outbuilding.

7.6 Assessment

No suitable features were recorded on the palm trees, so they are considered to support negligible suitability for roosting bats.

8. Badgers

8.1 Methodology

The survey involved a detailed investigation of the site to identify evidence of badger residence, foraging or territorial activity. This includes badger setts, latrine sites, dung piles, well-used trails, prints and hairs. Particular emphasis was placed on locating badger setts, paths and signs of territorial activity such as dung piles and latrines.

8.2 Limitations

Limitations were not encountered during the course of the survey.



8.3 **Results**

No evidence of badger activity was recorded on site where the works are to take place. The habitats on site could be used by badgers as a part of their wider foraging range as the nearby parkland is suitable for the formation of a badger sett although is separated from the site via multiple physical barriers including a main road.

8.4 Assessment

No evidence of badger residence, i.e., a set, or foraging activity was recorded on the site. When assessed against the criteria in Table 3, the site is considered to offer low suitability for badgers, and in a foraging capacity only.

9. Dormice

9.1 Methodology

An assessment was made of the suitability of habitat on site to support hazel dormice. Key habitats are woodland, scrub and hedgerows, particularly where these offer dense vegetation within which to nest/hibernate and key resources such as hazel nuts, fruiting/nectar-rich plants (e.g. hawthorn, bramble) to provide a continuum of food resources throughout the active season and honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* (for nesting material). Landscape-scale habitat linkages such as hedgerows are fundamental for dormouse presence where small scale or sub-optimal habitats are recorded within a site.

9.2 Limitations

Limitations were not encountered during the course of the survey.

9.3 Results

The habitats which could be considered suitable for dormice include the trees, scrub and hedgerows as they contain a species mix that could provide suitable foraging and nesting potential. However, these habitats remain relatively isolated within the surrounding urbanised landscape. The only adjacent connected habitat which could be functionally linked to the site is a small cluster of trees to the southwest.

The habitats which form the majority of the application site (managed grassland, ornamental planting, buildings and hardstanding) are considered to be wholly unsuitable for supporting dormice because they do not support resources that would be required to support the species.

9.4 Assessment

Overall, the trees, scrub and hedgerows are considered to support negligible potential for dormice due to their isolated nature limiting the chance of them sustaining a population. The remaining habitats on site are also considered to support negligible potential for dormice.



10. Hedgehogs

10.1 Methodology

The site was assessed for its suitability to support hedgehogs based on the presence of favoured habitats such as woodland edges, hedgerows, grassland and suburban habitats.

Hedgehogs are most abundant within gardens, parks and amenity land close to or within human settlements. They are generally scarce in areas of coniferous woodland, marshes and moorland, probably because of a lack of suitable sites and materials for the construction of winter nests (Morris, 2006). Any evidence of hedgehog activity such as prints or droppings was recorded.

10.2 Limitations

Low detections rates are associated with evidence of hedgehog activity; therefore, absence of evidence does not confirm the absence of hedgehogs. For this reason, the assessment of the likely presence/absence of hedgehogs has largely been informed by the species' local distribution and the habitats within the site and local area.

10.3 Results

The areas of planting and the lawns within the site have the potential to support foraging hedgehog although no direct evidence was noted.

10.4 Assessment

There is considered to be moderate potential for hedgehog to occur on site.

11. Reptiles

11.1 Methodology

An assessment was made of the site's suitability to support reptile populations. Key habitat features include: tussocky/patchy grassland; scrub edge; linear watercourses; ponds; compost heaps; brash piles and rubble/soil heaps. Linkage to suitable habitat within the surrounding landscape will increase the potential for reptiles to occur, although populations can occur within isolated/fragmented habitats even within urban areas.

11.2 Limitations

Limitations were not encountered during the course of the survey.

11.3 Results

Mature garden sites can support more widespread reptile species, such as slow-worm. The grass compost pile in the south-eastern corner of the site could be used by reptiles, particularly grass snakes to shelter and lay their eggs in. However, due to the well managed nature of the site with the exception of the compost pile there is limited shelter for reptiles to safely bask and hunt without becoming too exposed to predation.



11.4 Assessment

There is considered to be low potential for small numbers of widespread reptiles to occur on site. Particularly near the compost pile in the south-eastern corner.

12. Great Crested Newts

12.1 Methodology

Great crested newts are only present in their breeding ponds during the spring and early summer – for the rest of the year, they will be dispersed across the surrounding area, generally in grassland, scrub, woodland and hedgerows, although they may be found in gardens and brownfield sites. They can travel some distance from their breeding ponds, and as a general rule, developments within 500m of such a pond may have the potential to have an impact on GCN, although to a certain extent, this does depend on any intervening habitat or barriers to dispersal.

An assessment was made of any waterbodies and terrestrial habitat within the site for their suitability to support populations of amphibians. Suitable waterbodies will generally be characterised by the presence of good quality water, diverse macrophyte cover and an absence of fish. For the European-protected great crested newt, each waterbody is normally assessed using the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) system (Oldham et al., 2000) and assigned a grading score between zero (poor suitability) and 1 (excellent suitability).

12.2 Limitations

The HSI for great crested newts is a measure of habitat suitability. In general, ponds with high HSI scores are more likely to support great crested newts than those with low scores. However, in isolation, the system is not sufficiently precise to allow the conclusion that any particular pond with a high score will support newts, or that any pond with a low score will not do so (Oldham et al., 2000).

12.3 Results

There are no ponds located within the grounds of the application site. Furthermore, the waterbodies located within a 500m radius of the site are connected to the Longford River and so will likely support populations of fish or have a flow rate too high for GCN. A potential exception to this is a chain of ponds to the west of the river which could remain isolated from the river during the spring/summer breeding period. However, these ponds are separated from the site via extensive physical barriers including a brick wall which encloses the park where the waterbodies are located, multiple residential and commercial properties and a main road. In combination, these barriers great reduce the likelihood of GCN dispersing onto site to utilise the largely sub-optimal habitats present.

11.1 Assessment

Due to the identified waterbodies limited potential to support GCN in conjunction with the extensive physical barriers and sub-optimal habitats on site, there is considered to be negligible potential for GCN to be present on site.

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13. Breeding Birds

13.1 Methodology

An assessment was made of the site's suitability to support breeding bird species. Nesting birds will utilise a broad range of habitats, including: built structures, trees, scrub, isolated shrubs, dense herbaceous vegetation (terrestrial and aquatic) and open grassland. All bird species and evidence of breeding activity (active or inactive) observed on site were recorded.

13.2 Limitations

Limitations were not encountered during the course of the survey.

13.3 Results

The hedgerows, trees, scrub, buildings and ornamental planting present within the wider site are considered to support nesting opportunities for breeding birds.

13.4 Assessment

The site is considered to support moderate potential for breeding birds.



14. Discussion and Assessment of Impacts

14.1 Relevant legislation and policy

Circular 06/2005 identifies that applicants should not be required to provide information on protected species unless there is a reasonable likelihood that they will be present and affected by the proposed development. The site is considered to support habitats with suitability and potential for protected species and these may be affected by the proposed development. Therefore, the proposal triggers 'reasonable likelihood' under the Circular.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (commonly referred to as the Habitats Regulations) may apply should protected species be confirmed on site.

In the case that a European protected species (bats in this case) is found to be present and impacted by the proposal, the local planning authority will be required to engage with the Habitat Regulations. Permission will be granted unless:

a) the development is likely to result in a breach of the Habitats Regulations, and

b) is unlikely to be granted an EPS licence from Natural England to allow the development to proceed under a derogation from the law (under licence).

When considering whether Natural England would not be unlikely to grant a licence for the identified impact, the local planning authority must consider the three tests which are set out in the Habitat Regulations:

1. the consented operation must be for 'preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment'; (Regulation 53(2)(e))

2. there must be 'no satisfactory alternative' (Regulation 53(9)(a)); and

3. the action authorised 'will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range' (Regulation 53(9)(b)).

Natural England will grant a licence if the development proposal is able to meet the three tests.

Case-law (Morge vs. Hampshire County Council) has clarified that planning authorities are able to grant permission for developments that would cause a breach of the Regulations is likely (i.e. in the case of this proposal, destruction of a bat roost), provided that sufficient information is provided to give the planning authority assurance that the relevant EPSM licence is not unlikely to be granted - i.e. planning authorities also have a duty to assess planning applications against these tests.



14.2 **Designated sites**

The proposed development will not result in the direct loss of any designated sites.

Given the small scale of the scheme no impacts on designated sites associated with the development of the site are anticipated.

14.3 Habitats

The habitats which will be lost to the development comprise modified grassland, hardstanding, buildings, and introduced shrubs. These habitats are easily replicable and of low botanical value, therefore it is considered that there will be no impact to habitats of ecological importance such as priority habitats as a result of their loss.

14.4 Bats

The preliminary roost assessment confirmed that the house supports high roost suitability i.e. a structure which is obviously suitable for supporting larger numbers of bats, on a regular basis and for longer periods of time.

On the basis that the house was considered to support high suitability for roosting bats, there was considered to be a reasonable likelihood that bats would be present and affected by the proposed demolition works which will impact the features detailed in Table 4.

The emergence surveys conducted during July, August and September have confirmed that the house supports a soprano pipistrelle bat day roost. The proposed demolition will result in the loss of the identified bat roost and without mitigation, the proposed demolition works have the potential to result in the killing/injury of any bats present when works take place.

The bat mitigation guidelines identify that summer (non-maternity) roosts used by individuals / small numbers of more widespread species such as the species recorded within the house are of low conservation status.

The application site supports a small number of common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and serotine foraging bats and commuting soprano pipistrelle bats leaving or returning to roost. Increasing lighting could impact this behaviour which would indirectly impact roosts

The two outbuildings are considered to support negligible suitability for roosting bats. Therefore, no impacts on roosting bats are anticipated as a result of their demolition.

14.5 Badgers

The site supports low suitability for badger. Therefore, impacts to badgers could occur during construction if trenches are left open. Impacts on badgers associated with loss or damage of setts or loss of foraging habitat are not anticipated.



14.6 Hazel dormouse

The current proposals will predominantly impact habitats (grassland, hardstanding, buildings) which are considered to have negligible suitability for dormice. Therefore, no impacts on the species are anticipated.

14.7 Hedgehog

Impacts on hedgehogs are likely to occur if trenches are left open during the construction phase of the development.

14.8 Reptiles

The proposal will result in the loss of habitat which is considered to support low potential for populations of reptiles. Due to this, precautionary avoidance measures are proposed for the clearance and construction phase given the sites proximity to suitable habitat.

14.9 Great crested newts

The proposal will not result in the loss of habitat which is considered to support potential for GCN. Therefore, no impacts on the species are anticipated.

14.10 Breeding birds

The development of the site will likely result in the loss of suitable breeding bird habitat. The removal of this habitat has the potential to damage or destroy active bird nests if carried out during the breeding bird season which is generally seen as extending from March to the end of August, although may extend longer depending on local conditions.



15. Requirement for further surveys

Further surveys are required where there is a reasonable likelihood that a protected species will be present and impacted by the proposed development. An assessment into the requirement for further surveys is presented below, however in summary, all further surveys considered necessary have been undertaken.

It is important that planning decisions are informed by current ecological survey data. Due to this, there is a limited time frame that phase 1 and phase 2 surveys are valid before becoming outdated. This time frame can vary depending on any changes in project circumstances or plans but it is generally considered that phase 1 ecological surveys are valid for a period of 18 months (CIEEM, 2019). Projects that take place over periods longer than 18 months might be required to carry out further ecological surveys to ensure planning authorities have the necessary up-to-date information to make well informed, evidence-based decisions.

15.1 **Designated sites**

No further surveys are considered necessary.

15.2 Habitats

If the exiting oak trees or lime trees on site are to be removed during the works, a further ground level roost assessment will be needed to identify any potential roosting features on the trees that could be used by bats. If these trees are not to be impacted, no further surveys are considered necessary.

15.3 Bats

In order to provide robust confirmation of the status of bat roosts at the site and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development as required by Circular 06/2005, further survey work in accordance with Natural England standing advice and the BCT Good Practice Guidelines was undertaken for the house. This same survey work will be used to inform the third test of the Habitat Regulations.

In accordance with these guidelines, further survey effort took the form of dusk emergence presence/absence surveys undertaken during the bat active season.

The proposal will not result in the permanent loss of any important habitat beyond the area which surrounds the house. Therefore, further survey work is considered unnecessary for understanding impacts on foraging and commuting bats beyond the presence/absence surveys undertaken, subject to precautionary avoidance measures including a sensitive lighting scheme.

15.4 Badgers

Subject to the precautionary mitigation measures set out in Section 16, no further surveys are considered necessary.



15.5 Hazel dormice

As no impact to dormice are anticipated, no further recommendations in relation to the species are considered necessary.

15.6 Hedgehog

Subject to the precautionary mitigation measures set out in Section 16, no further surveys are considered necessary.

15.7 Reptiles

Subject to the precautionary mitigation measures set out in Section 16, no further surveys are considered necessary.

15.8 Great crested newts

As no impact to GCN are anticipated, no further recommendations in relation to the species are considered necessary.

15.9 Breeding birds

Subject to the precautionary mitigation measures set out in Section 16, no further surveys are considered necessary.



16. Mitigation recommendations

16.1 Bats

16.2.1 Licensing

As this work will result in the destruction of the identified bat roost, an EPSM licence will need to be obtained from Natural England before the proposed demolition works commence. A licence can be applied for once consent has been obtained for the proposed works. Provided the development can pass the three 'derogation' tests discussed above Natural England will grant the relevant licence to allow the developer to legally carry out the work that would otherwise be illegal – i.e. to destroy a bat roost and disturb / take bats. The site falls within the remit of the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) – the BMCL licence application process takes 10 working days as opposed to the traditional EPSM licence which takes 30 working days.

16.2.2 Destructive search mitigation strategy

- The destructive search will be carried out during the active season i.e. April to late-October. A toolbox talk will be given to contractors prior to the demolition of the house commencing. The toolbox talk will provide an introduction to the legal protection afforded to bats, the status of bats at the site including likely species and roosting locations, evidence to look out for and the protocol which will be followed if a roosting bat is identified. Appropriate signage will be provided and displayed on site to inform contractors of the required protocol when working where a bat roost has been recorded.
- The destructive search works will be led by a licensed bat worker, accompanied by construction contractors. There will be no disturbance of identified roost feature without the supervision of a bat worker. This is because during the proposed demolition period bats, if present, bats may be very difficult to locate and easily be overlooked by contractors.
- Prior to works commencing, crevice roost features on the timber wall features will be inspected with an endoscope. If a feature can be inspected exhaustively and it can be certain that no roosting bats are within, the feature will be temporarily blocked with sponge which will remain in place until the demolition takes place. If a feature cannot be inspected exhaustively or a roosting bat is found, a one way-exclusion device will be installed.
- Permanent exclusion will be carried out using techniques specified within the most up-to-date edition of the Bat Workers Manual. One-way exclusion devises (which will allow bats to exit the roost but not re-enter) will be fitted by a licenced bat ecologist and will remain in position for a period of at least five consecutive days / nights throughout a spell of suitable weather conditions (in which bats are likely to leave the roost i.e. suitable survey conditions), or remain longer until these conditions prevail. Exclusion devises include acetate flaps, plastic tubes and plastic funnels.
- Once at least five consecutive days of suitable weather have prevailed, the roost feature will be sealed until the demolition works take place.



- The works will be carried out from a suitably erected scaffold or mobile elevated work platform, as required.
- Any bats which are found during the destructive search works will be captured by the licenced bat worker with the use of thin gloves or a hand net. The bat will immediately be transferred to a holding bag before being placed within the previously erected bat box within the site grounds. Any injured bats will immediately be taken into care.
- Once the licensed bat worker is satisfied that the roosts have been safely removed, the contractors can complete the renovation works.
- If a bat is found during unsupervised works, all works will cease and the supervising bat worker will be contacted immediately.

16.2.3 Provision of new roosting sites

One Schwegler 2F bat box or similar will be installed within the site. This will provide a temporary alternative roost site whilst the proposed demolition and construction works are undertaken and will be retained as enhancement post development.

In addition, an integrated bat box such as the Verona Build-In Woodstone bat box will be built directly into the eastern or western wall of the new dwelling. The exterior wall cladding will installed over the integrated bat box, leaving just a small access point visible. The box will be installed as high as possible and at least above 2.5m.

16.2.4 Advisory notes:

In order to limit any effects on foraging and commuting bats, external lighting should be limited to only that which is absolutely necessary for safety purposes, both during the construction phase and once the proposals are complete. The following lighting measures are required:

- Construction works between March and October should be undertaken during daylight hours only to avoid disturbance to bats that may forage and commute through or near the site.
- Lighting to the building should be as low brightness as possible, kept at a low level and directed away from all structures and boundaries. Lighting on sensors should not be so sensitive that foraging bats trigger them.
- All lighting must follow the Bat Conservation Trusts and Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance on bats and artificial lighting (BCT, 2023).

16.2 Badgers

In order to avoid harm to badgers during the construction works, any trenches will either be covered at night or fitted with a soil or plank ramp to enable any badgers which fall in to leave on their own accord.



16.3 Hedgehogs

In order to avoid harm to hedgehogs during construction works the following precautionary measures will be employed:

- Any trenches will either be covered at night or fitted with a soil or plank ramp to enable any hedgehogs that fall in to leave of their own accord.
- Any leaf litter or garden waste piles will be dismantled by hand in a sensitive and careful manner.
- No bonfires will be made or lit on site.

16.4 **Reptiles**

Given the low potential for low populations reptiles to be present within the habitats that will be impacted by the proposal it is not considered necessary to carry out further detailed surveys. It is important that a precautionary approach to the construction phase is adopted by abiding by the following measures:

- All waste shall be placed directly into a skip so that rubble piles and therefore
 potential hibernation or terrestrial resting areas are not created in areas which will
 subsequently be disturbed by site works.
- All construction related materials and equipment will be stored on areas of hardstanding or gravel to ensure that habitats outside the works area are not disturbed or damaged.
- Piles of loose sand or other granular materials into which reptiles could bury are not to be left around the site. All such materials will ideally be delivered in bags and kept in such bags until required for use. Bags should be stored on pallets. If it is essential that they are delivered loose, they should only be dug into by hand.
- Any accumulations of brash will be removed by hand in a sensitive and careful manner.
- All trenches will be left covered at night. They must be checked in the morning before they are filled in.

16.5 Breeding birds

Care should be taken that development does not impact breeding birds. The bird nesting season is taken to be March to August, inclusive. Any removal of suitable nest habitat including any trees, scrub or hedgerows will to be removed will either need to be undertaken outside of this period or else checked by an experienced ecologist to ensure that no nesting birds are present. If occupied nests are present, then the nest must not be removed and works around the nest can only recommence once the nest becomes unoccupied of its own accord.



17. Enhancements

The delivery of biodiversity enhancement on development sites is promoted by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

Where opportunities exist it is best practice to provide enhancement features which encourage greater biodiversity within development sites in accordance with the NPPF and Local Planning Authority's responsibilities under the NERC Act.

Opportunities for enhancement which are proportionate to the scale of the development include:

- Habitat enhancements are set out within the BNG Assessment.
- The provision of new bat roosting opportunities in the form of four bat boxes. These should be installed as high as possible, at least 3m above ground on the newly erected dwelling. Ibstock enclosed bat bricks would be suitable for the buildings and can be integrated into the structures wall plate for a seamless completion.
- The provision of additional bird nesting opportunities. These could be external boxes located on the walls of the new dwelling or integrated swift bricks implemented during the construction of the building. A total of two swift boxes/bricks would be appropriate.



18. Conclusion

The extended phase 1 ecological and bat roost assessment has confirmed that the site supports opportunities for a range of protected species including bats, reptiles, dormice, hedgehogs and breeding birds.

The preliminary roost assessment confirmed that the house supports high suitability for roosting bats. Therefore, further survey effort was undertaken to confirm the presence/absence of roosts, characterise any bat roost/s, assess the extent bats may be affected by the proposed demolition works and devise an appropriate mitigation strategy to support the proposed works and address any breaches in the legislation. In accordance with Natural England standing advice and BCT Good Practice Guidelines, three presence/absence surveys for the house were undertaken during July, August and September. No further survey work is required for the two outbuildings.

This survey work has confirmed that the house supports a soprano pipistrelle bat day roost.

The proposals will result in the loss of the identified bat roost and as such a Natural England BMCL licence will be required in order for the proposed demolition works to proceed. A mitigation strategy has been designed that would provide alternative roosting opportunities within the proposal which are proportional to the scale of impact. The mitigation strategy also sets out recommended timings and methods.

Given the scale of the proposal, it is possible to deliver the scheme with a range of measures which avoid impacts on the majority of the other identified protected and priority species. These include sensitive timing of the works, careful vegetation removal and sensitive lighting.

Opportunities for ecological enhancement have been suggested for the site.



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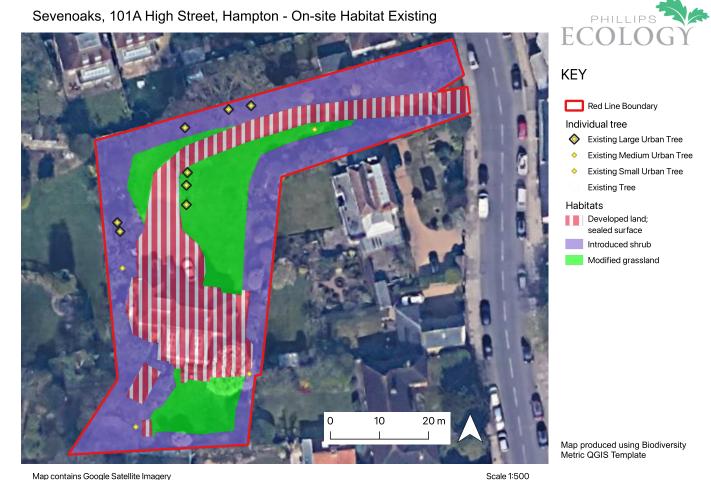


Appendix 1 – Proposed Site Plan





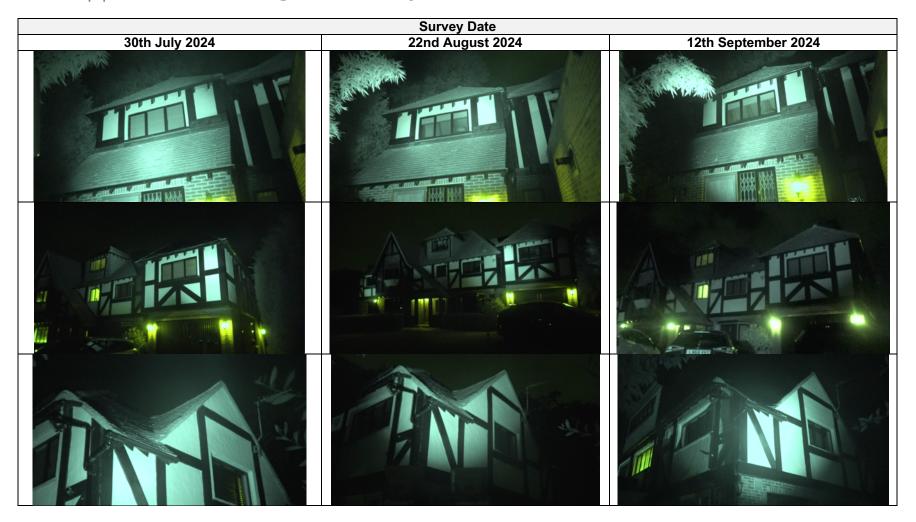
Appendix 2 – UKHabs Habitat Map



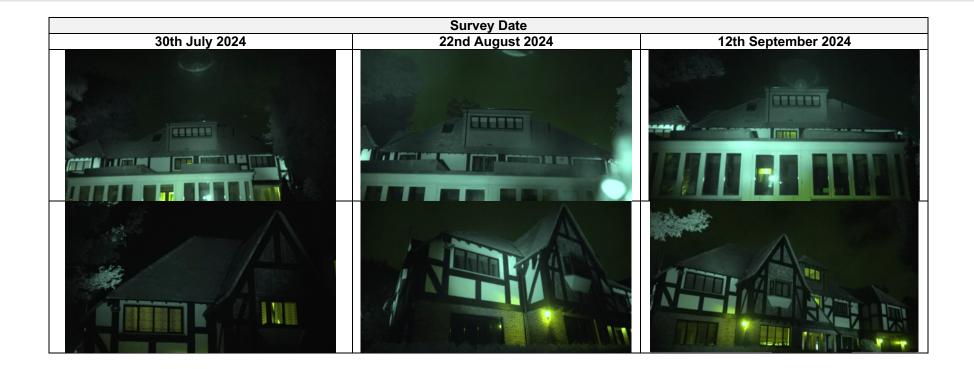
Map contains Google Satellite Imagery



Appendix 3 – Emergence Survey NVAs Screenshots









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