



Unit 3, 5 Fore Street, Chudleigh, Devon TQ13 0HX

Susan Yung
39 Lopez Road
Plymouth
Devon
PL2 3DZ

23rd January 2024

Our Ref. 0297

Dear Susan,

RE: 39 Lopez Road, Plymouth – Ecological Assessment (Updated)

Thank you for appointing Devon Ecology to undertake an ecological assessment of your property.

Introduction

I am a qualified ecologist with 20 years' experience. I am also a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and as such abide by their professional code of conduct. I have held a Class 2 bat licence with Natural England since 2007. My registration number is 2015-12404-CLS-CLS. I am registered to use the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) registration number RC154 and I am a registered consultant on Natural England's Bat Earned Recognition Scheme (WML-CL47 Ref: BER0102).

I inspected the property on the 5th January 2024, which is located at grid reference SX 46905 56899 (What3Words: smiled.dare.ears). The survey was undertaken primarily for bats which was consistent with current good practice guidelines (Collins, 2023¹), whereby the building was assessed for its potential to hold roosting bats using the criteria in **Table 1**. Other protected species such as nesting birds were also taken into account.

Table 1: Bat roosting potential (adapted from Collins, 2023)

Potential Suitability	Description
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used opportunistically at any time of year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/ or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats

¹ Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London

Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
High	A structure 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. These structures have potential to support high conservation status roosts e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation sites.
Roost	Bats and/or evidence of bats found.

The Site comprises a semi-detached two-storey property with a small garden area to the rear. Currently used as a takeaway food outlet with a flat above. It is located in a residential area in the City of Plymouth.

It is understood that you the applicant wish to build a single-storey extension on the rear (west) side elevation of the property to create a new storage area for the business.

Desk Study

A search of the government website MAGIC was undertaken within 2km radius of the Site for international and national statutory designations for nature conservation. MAGIC was also searched for priority habitats as well as European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) listed within 2km of the Site. The Devon Environment viewer was also searched for Devon Species Consultation Zones. These searches were undertaken on the 8th of January 2024.

As the proposals are very small and in the curtilage of the existing garden, a data search from the local environmental records centre was not considered necessary as it would be unlikely to add significantly to the assessment.

Protected Sites

There are no statutory internationally important sites for nature conservation within the 2km search area.

There is one statutory nationally important site for nature conservation within the 2km search area:

- ☛ Ham Woods Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located approximately 0.9km northwest of the Site at its closest point. It is an urban woodland site.

Priority Habitats

There are several priority habitats within the 2km search area including:

- ☛ Coastal: Coastal saltmarsh and mudflats.
- ☛ Marine: Intertidal substrate foreshore.
- ☛ Woodland: Deciduous woodland and traditional orchards.

There are no priority habitats on or close to the Site.

Granted EPSLs

There are three EPSLs for bats within the 2km search radius:

- ☛ Licence no. EPSM2009-1007 granted to allow the destruction of a breeding site and resting place for brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus* bats located approximately 0.9km south of the Site.
- ☛ Licence no. 2014-1458-EPS-MIT granted to allow the destruction of a resting place for brown long-eared bats located approximately 1.4km east-southeast of the Site.
- ☛ Licence no. 2014-4806-EPS-MIT granted to allow damage and destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* bats located approximately 1.7km north-northeast of the Site.

Devon Species Consultation Zones

The Site is within a Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone which is an area of 5km radius around known records of this species.

Building Description

The property is a two-storey, semi-detached building constructed of rendered masonry with a hipped slate roof with clay ridge and hip tiles. There are UPVC soffits and fascias around the building and all doors and windows are UPVC.

There is a single storey storeroom at the rear of the property which has a mineral felted flat roof, UPVC fascia boards, windows and door.

The main building roof will not be affected directly or indirectly by the proposal therefore no inspection of the loft of the property was necessary. There is no roof space in the single-storey extension.

The garden is surrounded by a high masonry wall and comprises hardstanding and amenity grassland. There are a few small ornamental shrubs on the north side next to the boundary wall.

Features Suitable for Bats

The ridge and roof tiles of the main building were mainly all tight with no suitable gaps for bats to access, although the roof will not be affected by the proposals. The existing single storey flat roofed extension has no features suitable for bats, the fascia boards are tight into the wall with no gaps.

There was no evidence of bats or likelihood of bats being affected.

There was no evidence of nesting birds anywhere on or in the building.

See photographs in **Appendix 1**.

Garden Area to be Affected.

The area to be built on for the rear single-storey extension is a small area of concrete patio and amenity grass lawn, which has very limited ecological value. There is a possibility that common

garden birds e.g. blackbird *Turdus merula* could potentially nest in the small shrubs in the garden but there was no evidence that they have done so.

Assessment, Recommendations and Mitigation

Protected Sites and Priority Habitats

There are no predicted effects to protected sites or priority habitats due to the small nature of the proposed development and the distances involved.

Bats

All bat species are protected by current legislation, and it is an offence to disturb/injure/kill them or damage/destroy their roosts. There were no visible features likely to be used by bats anywhere on or in the property. The property areas to be affected are regarded as having no bat roost potential (Collins, 2023). No further surveys for bats or licence from Natural England will be required and work can proceed as planned with negligible risk to roosting bats.

Mitigation: In the extremely unlikely event that a bat is discovered during any work on the property, works must stop immediately in that area and the project ecologist must be called for advice and the procedure in **Appendix 2** followed.

Birds

All wild bird species are protected while nesting by current legislation. There was no evidence of nesting birds on or in this property.

Mitigation: In the extremely unlikely event any active nests are found during development activities, work must be delayed in this area and the nest must be left undisturbed and a suitable buffer put around it until nesting has finished and chicks have fledged. As a precautionary measure, if the shrubs in the garden need to be removed from near the north boundary wall, do this during the period between September and February (inclusive) to avoid the bird nesting season.

Garden Area to be Affected.

There is unlikely to be any other protected species affected by the proposed development and the loss of a small area of lawn is a negligible effect ecologically.

Biodiversity Enhancements

As a measure of good practice and in line with national and local planning policy, biodiversity enhancements should be incorporated into the design to achieve a biodiversity net gain (BNG) with a target of at least 10% gain.

There are limited opportunities to provide appropriate biodiversity enhancements to this property, however, to achieve a biodiversity net gain it is proposed to include an extensive green roof on the new extension (**Table 2**). An extensive green roof is largely self-perpetuating and low maintenance, planted with sedum, mosses and low grasses on a thin substrate to minimise weight.

Table 2: Biodiversity Budget Table

Habitat Lost	Area Lost (m ²)	Habitat Proposed	Area Proposed	Area Gain (m ²)	BNG %
Amenity Grass Lawn	14	Extensive Green Roof	32	18	56.25

If desired, when selecting plants for the retained garden area, species that benefit bees and other pollinators should be chosen. The Royal Horticultural Society provides a 'Plants for Pollinators' list available free on line at [Plants for Pollinators advice and downloadable lists / RHS Gardening](#).

I am happy to provide further advice on enhancements on request.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,




Mark Witherall BSc. (Hons) MCIEEM
Director and Principal Ecologist



Appendix 1: Photographs

Notes	Photograph
North elevation.	 A photograph showing the north elevation of a two-story white building. A red sign above the entrance reads "YUNGS CARRY OUT" with "Delicious Chinese Meals" below it. A tall black chimney is visible on the right side of the building. The sky is overcast.
East elevation.	 A photograph showing the east elevation of the building. A red sign above the entrance reads "YUNGS CARRY OUT" with "Delicious Chinese Meals" below it. A black car is parked in front of the building. The sky is overcast.
Rear (west) extension store room.	 A photograph showing the rear (west) extension store room of the building. The extension is a single-story white structure with two windows. A satellite dish is mounted on the wall. The sky is overcast.

Notes	Photograph
Rear elevation and garden area to be affected.	 A photograph showing the rear elevation of a two-story house. The house has a grey exterior and a white door. There are several windows, some with white frames. A small garden area with green grass is visible in the foreground. A paved path leads to the back door. To the right, there is a smaller, single-story extension of the house. The sky is blue with some clouds.

Appendix 2: Procedure to Follow if Bats are Found During Development Works

- ☛ If at any point during the works bats are discovered, contractors should stop work immediately and telephone Devon Ecology on [REDACTED]
- ☛ Devon Ecology will either provide a licensed bat ecologist to the site or liaise directly with Natural England. Actions will then be taken following advice given by Natural England. This may include removal of bats, but only where direct written or verbal permission is gained from Natural England;
- ☛ Only when Natural England is satisfied that the risk to bats is no longer an issue will works recommence.
- ☛ Should it be found that the operation being carried out is of more risk to bats than was originally thought, then it is likely that works will only be able to proceed under a development licence from Natural England;
- ☛ If a bat is found under a tile or any other aperture, works will stop immediately (as above). If the bat does not voluntarily fly out, then the aperture will be carefully covered over to protect the bat(s) from the elements, leaving a small gap for the bat to escape voluntarily. Further advice will then be sought from Natural England (as above). Any covering should be free from grease or other contaminants, and should not be fibreglass-based materials;
- ☛ Avoid handling bats. Bats should not be handled with bare hands. If a decision is made to handle a bat (e.g. for good reason in the case of an injured bat or a bat in immediate danger of injury or death) then gloves must be worn to avoid being bitten. Any injured bats should be placed in a secure ventilated box (e.g. cardboard box) by the contractor for the bat's protection whilst awaiting the arrival of the bat ecologist;
- ☛ If during the course of works anyone is bitten by a bat then the area of the bite should be washed immediately with soap and water and medical advice sought.