

**A E W C**

# **Bat Assessment Report**

**Palace Cinema  
Normandy Street  
Alton  
GU34 1DE**

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22-091  
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# Contents

Summary..... 2

1 Introduction ..... 3

2 Methods..... 6

3 Constraints/Limitations..... 7

4 Results..... 7

5 Evaluation, Conclusions & Recommendations ..... 9

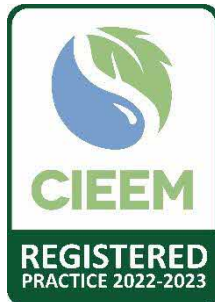
6 Procedure to follow in the event a bat is found on site ..... 9

Figure 1: Showing the location of the site..... 4

Figure 2: Showing the building subject to survey..... 4

Figure 3: Showing the proposed plans. .... 6



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## Summary

AEWC Ltd were commissioned by Raj Jeyasingam to undertake a daytime bat assessment at Palace Cinema, 58 Normandy Street, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 1DE at grid reference SU 72016 39659 to help inform the proposed development of the site.

This report details the results of the survey, which was carried out on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2022 by Annika Binet, a Natural England licensed bat ecologist.

The site contains a cinema building which is proposed for conversion to 1- and 2-bedroom dwelling units including creation of windows within existing solid walls. The roof and roof voids of the building will not be impacted by the proposed works.

The building was considered to have low potential to support roosting bats within the batten space of the roof, however the areas proposed to be impacted by the works do not hold any potential for use by bats and, as such, there are no known constraints regarding these species and the proposed development.

Should works directly impacting on the pitched roofs or roof voids be proposed in future, a single emergence survey will be required to confirm likely absence of bats from the site.

Lighting can have notable negative impacts on commuting bats, that are known to be present locally. There is potential for lighting during and post-development to cause indirect disturbance to bats within the local area. Additional external lighting should be avoided or kept to the minimum necessary, and preferably on a motion sensor to reduce lighting time.

Additional work lighting which may be required during the development must be positioned to ensure that it shines onto the area of works with minimal spread into the wider area.

In the unlikely event a bat is found on site during the works the procedure detailed in section 6 of this report must be followed.

This report has been prepared by AEWC Limited, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client. We disclaim any responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of the above. This report is confidential to the client and we accept no responsibility of whatsoever nature to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at their own risk.

The information and data which has been prepared and provided is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Professional Guidance and 'Code of Professional Conduct' issued by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 AEWG Ltd were commissioned by Raj Jeyasingam to undertake a daytime bat assessment at Palace Cinema, 58 Normandy Street, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 1DE to help inform the proposed development of the site.
- 1.2 The bat surveys and report writing were carried out in accordance with Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines (Bat Conservation Trust, 2016).
- 1.3 A bat assessment was carried out in 2013 in relation to proposed works at the time to separate a disused section of the theatre to allow the construction of a purpose-built accommodation block, which was completed at the time.
- 1.4 Due to the intervening time and the current plans impacting the area of the building retained at that time, an update bat assessment was required to ascertain whether bats are present at the site and represent a constraint to the proposed development.
- 1.5 This report details the results of the bat assessment and outlines recommendations in relation to bats and the proposed development of the site.

### **Aims and objectives**

- 1.6 The objectives of the survey were to:
  - Identify the potential of the building on the site to support roosting bats;
  - Identify whether bats are present using the buildings on site;
  - Estimate the size and status of any existing bat roost within the buildings;
  - Determine the potential impacts on any bat roost from the proposed development schedule; and
  - Provide information for use in the design and development of ecological mitigation and enhancement measures where appropriate.

### **Site Location**

- 1.7 The proposed development site is located at Palace Cinema, 58 Normandy Street, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 1DE at grid reference SU 72016 39659. The site is located in the town of Alton in Hampshire. The surrounding landscape comprises residential and commercial development and associated amenity land and semi-natural green space. See Figure 1.

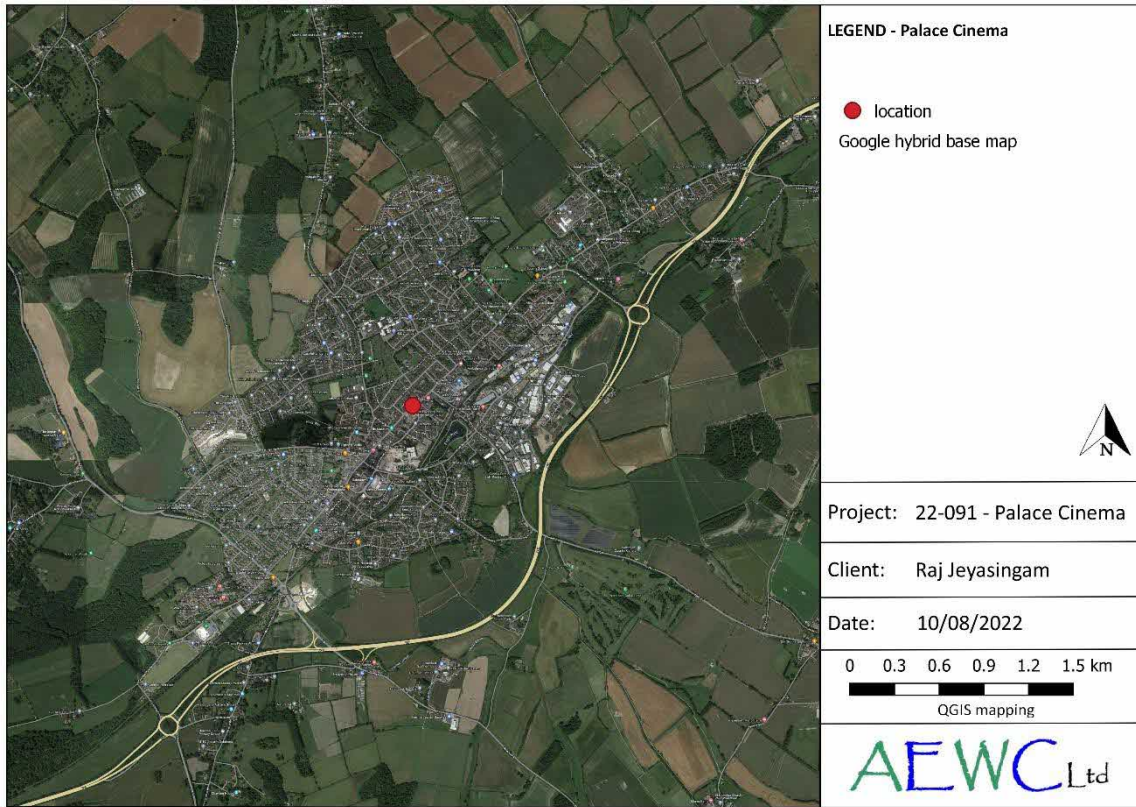


FIGURE 1: SHOWING THE LOCATION OF THE SITE

1.8 The site contains a cinema building.

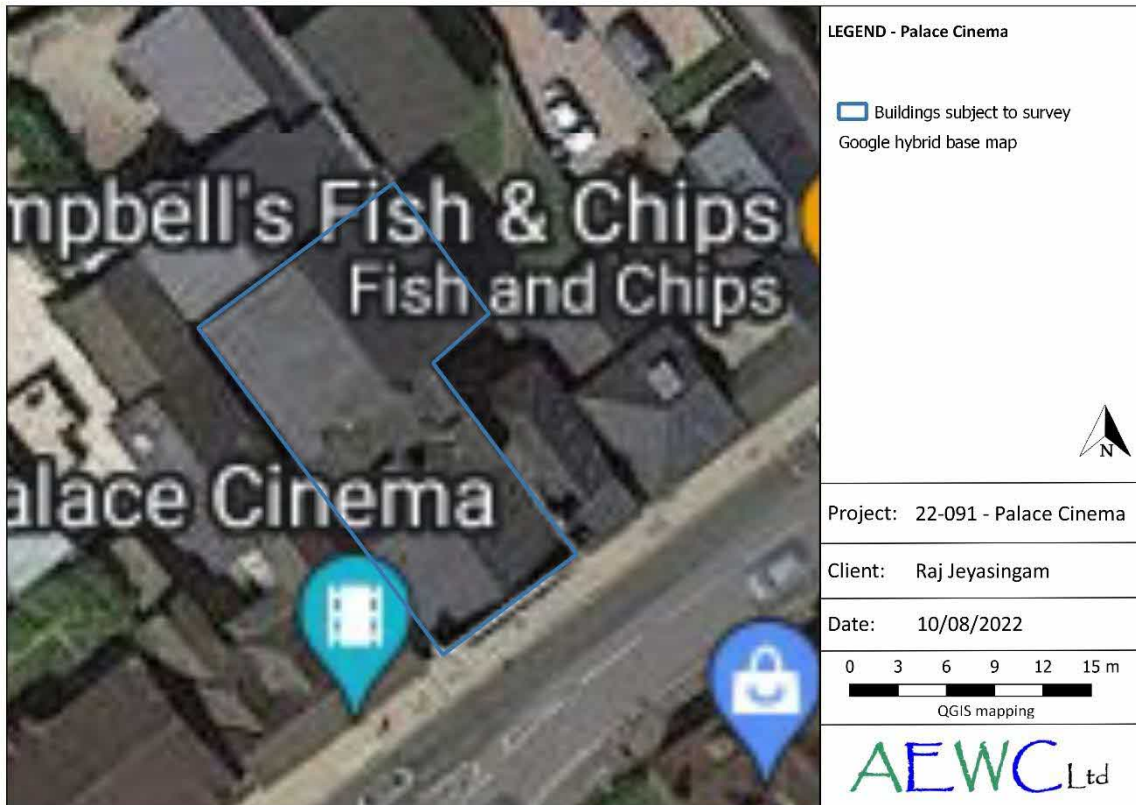


FIGURE 2: SHOWING THE BUILDING SUBJECT TO SURVEY.

### **Legislation**

- 1.9 All species of bats are listed on *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* which affords them protection under *Section 9*, as amended. They are also protected under the *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*. In combination, this makes it an offence to:
- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture etc.);
  - possess;
  - intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, obstruct access to any structure or place used by a scheduled animal for shelter or protection, or disturb any animal occupying such a structure or place; and
  - sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative) or advertise for buying or selling such things.
- 1.10 A roost is defined as ‘any structure or place which a bat uses for shelter or protection’. As bats tend to reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that a roost is protected whether or not bats are present.
- 1.11 Any disturbance of a bat occupying a roost can lead to prosecution. Disturbance can be caused by noise, vibration and artificial lighting. Penalties for breaking the law can include fines of £5,000 per bat, imprisonment and the seizure of equipment.
- 1.12 Furthermore, seven bat species (barbastelle, Bechstein’s, noctule, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, lesser horseshoe and greater horseshoe) are also Species of Principal Importance in England under *Section 41* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*.

### **Development proposals**

- 1.13 The proposal is for internal conversion of the existing structure to create six apartments.



FIGURE 3: SHOWING THE PROPOSED PLANS.

## 2 Methods

### Daytime Assessment

- 2.1 A detailed bat building inspection was undertaken on the 9<sup>th</sup> August 2022 by Annika Binet, a Natural England licensed bat ecologist.
- 2.2 A systematic internal inspection of the building was conducted using a high-powered torch to illuminate all areas thought to be suitable for roosting bats. Additionally, an external search around the perimeter of the building(s) was conducted and any possible access points i.e. gaps and crevices were noted and surveyed with a high-powered torch and ladder as appropriate.
- 2.3 The building’s suitability for bat roosting was assessed by examining structural features that may influence the suitability of a building to support roosting bats; these include the presence of a roof void, the presence of access points into the building (including gaps beneath barge boards, weatherboarding, soffits and fascias, gaps under lead flashing, gaps within masonry and under loose tiles, gaps between tenon and mortise joints), the complexity and size of any roof void and daytime light levels in the roof void.

- 2.4 The building's suitability for roosting bats was also assessed by examining the surrounding habitat. Important habitat features surrounding the structure which may influence roost potential include whether the structure is in a semi-rural or parkland location, its proximity to a significant linear habitat features such as a watercourse, mature hedgerow, wooded lanes or an area of woodland.
- 2.5 All surfaces were also surveyed for signs of bat presence. Features of potential value to bats were surveyed not only for the presence of bats but also for signs that could indicate use by bats, such as:
  - bat droppings that are dry and do not putrefy, but can crumble away to dust;
  - staining of access points used by bats to enter the structure; and
  - feeding remains such as moth and butterfly wings.
- 2.6 Taking account of these architectural, habitat features and signs of presence, the building was then assigned a level of roost suitability based the criteria given in the Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2016) and professional judgement. The primary objective of this exercise was to identify the need for further detailed bat survey later in the year, or alternatively to obtain sufficient information that would dismiss the need for further assessment.

### 3 Constraints/Limitations

- 3.1 Bats are difficult to locate in large structures, with so many potential roosting areas, particularly in inaccessible areas such as large buildings, finding the exact roosting site can be difficult, especially male/single bat roosting sites. It should be noted that it is not always possible to identify bat presence by examining externally around buildings as poor weather conditions may have washed away droppings which were deposited on exposed surfaces.
- 3.2 Bats can have seasonal use of buildings and being so mobile may arrive and start using a site after it has been surveyed, or roost somewhere else during the period it was surveyed. For this reason, bats may potentially be present but remain undetected, particularly during daytime assessment.

### 4 Results

#### **Daytime Assessment**

- 4.1 The building on site has been added to over time and is of brick and block construction with rendered sections of wall. It has a number of gabled and flat-roofed sections, with the gabled roofs supporting slate tiles and are internally lined with wooden sarking boarding.
- 4.2 The rear section of the building has the original lathe and plaster curved ceiling still in place and this is proposed for retention throughout and following completion of the



development. A large roof void is present above this section of the building which was accessed during the 2013 survey and found to be highly cobwebbed and dusty with no evidence of the presence of bats. This area was not accessed during the 2022 survey.

4.3 Externally the slate roof does have a low number of potential access points including gaps in the tile body under lead flashing and at the ridge tiles. However, these do not lead into the roof void. The roof is lined with wood and so small crevices may be available for roosting. The fascia boards are tight-fitting with no potential access points observed.

4.4 The location in which the new windows are proposed for creation consists of rendered brick walls with no roosting potential evident in these areas.



**Photograph 1:** *East-facing rendered wall in which windows are proposed for installation*



**Photograph 2:** *Flat roof section of building*



**Photograph 3:** *West-facing rendered wall in which windows are proposed for installation*



**Photograph 4:** *Main cinema hall*

## 5 Evaluation, Conclusions & Recommendations

- 5.1 Initial observations consider the local area suitable for bats, habitats within the surrounding area provide foraging and commuting opportunities for bats, buildings within the area provide potential roosting opportunities.
- 5.2 The building was considered to have low potential to support roosting bats within the batten space of the roof, however the areas proposed to be impacted by the works do not hold any potential for use by bats and, as such, there are no known constraints regarding these species and the proposed development.
- 5.3 Should works directly impacting on the pitched roofs or roof voids be proposed in future, a single emergence survey will be required to confirm likely absence of bats from the site.
- 5.4 Lighting can have notable negative impacts on commuting bats, that are known to be present locally. There is potential for lighting during and post-development to cause indirect disturbance to bats within the local area. Additional external lighting should be avoided or kept to the minimum necessary, and preferably on a motion sensor to reduce lighting time.
- 5.5 Additional work lighting which may be required during the development must be positioned to ensure that it shines onto the area of works with minimal spread into the wider area.
- 5.6 In the unlikely event a bat is found on site during the works the procedure detailed in section 6 below must be followed.

## 6 Procedure to follow in the event a bat is found on site

- 6.1 Bats are present within the vicinity of the site and may be found at any location on, in or around the buildings. Bats are protected species, and these procedures must be followed to avoid committing an offence.
- 6.2 If a bat is found at any location around the site DO NOT TOUCH unless necessary for the safety of the bat.
- 6.3 If the bat was uncovered in a roosting location carefully replace covering ensuring the bat is not crushed or harmed. If this is not possible cover the animal with a loose covering.
- 6.4 Stop all work at that area and the immediate vicinity. Work may continue at other areas around the site.
- 6.5 Call the AEW C Ltd bat licensed project ecologist Daniel Whitby [REDACTED], call the office on [REDACTED], or licensed ecologists Annika Binet [REDACTED] or Brigitte de Coriolis [REDACTED]

## 7 References

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