

Application for Derogation

Under Regulation 54 & 54A of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended

Supporting information for application for derogation licence to exclude colony of Soprano pipistrelle bats *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* from the roof of the new courthouse building in Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim

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1. INTRODUCTION

I was contracted by the Office of Public Works to conduct a bat survey at the new courthouse building in Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim. During the summer of 2025, bats had been entering the building and getting trapped inside. The caretaker reported seeing a number of bats in a boiler room on the second storey at the rear of the building and individual bats in various rooms throughout the building.

The building was surveyed internally and externally for bats and birds on 22nd August 2025. A bat detector survey was conducted at dusk on 22nd August 2025.

The survey was conducted by Dr Caroline Shiel, B.Sc., Ph.D. Dr Shiel was awarded a Ph.D. in 1999 on the ecology of Leisler's bat in Ireland. She has over 30 years' experience conducting bat surveys in Ireland.

2. BACKGROUND TO PROPOSED ACTIVITY

The new modern courthouse building in Carrick-on-Shannon is located at Shannon Lodge, Townparks – Grid reference 53.944673, -8.0906126.

The current courthouse building was constructed in 1997 to replace the old Courthouse building, dating from 1822, which is now The Dock arts centre. The courthouse was designed by Burke Kennedy Doyle Architects and comprises three courtrooms and meeting rooms. It is located at Caddagh Glebe 200 m north of the River Shannon.

The building is owned by the Office of Public Works. I was contacted by David Hicks of OPW to inform me that they were experiencing a problem with bats getting trapped inside the courthouse building for the last couple of years. In 2025, a large number of bats were trapped inside the boiler room on the second storey at the rear of the building. The caretaker reported this incident to OPW.

A survey of the building was conducted on 22nd August 2026. A single dead Soprano pipistrelle was found stuck in a grille on the louvred doors of the boiler room. Examination of the boiler room revealed several vents in the ceiling where bats could have gained access to the boiler room below. Once in the boiler room they were trapped and could not get through the metal grille on the louvred doors. The trapped bats were most likely young bats that were exploring their surroundings. Bats were also entering various rooms in the building via roof vents in the ceilings.

3. ACTIVITIES TO BE COVERED BY THE DEROGATION LICENCE

It is not possible to block all the ceiling vents through which bats are gaining access to the courthouse building. There is no attic space as the building has a flat roof.

The only way to prevent bats getting trapped inside the building is to prevent them from roosting in the roof of the building.

It is proposed to exclude the bats from building by sealing all gaps at wall plate level around the entire building.

4. SURVEY REPORT

Daylight Inspection

The building was inspected both internally and externally for bats or signs of bats on 22nd August 2025 during daylight hours. The interior of the building was systematically searched

for signs of bats in the form of live bats, bat droppings, urine stains, culled insect fragments or dead bats. The external walls and windows of the building were examined for evidence of bats using a high-powered torch (Ledlenser Rechargeable System).

Bat Detector Survey

A dusk bat detector survey was conducted on 22nd August 2025 from approximately 15mins before sunset (Sunset 20.45) and ran for 2 hours.

One thermal imaging scope was trained on the northeastern elevation of the building for the duration of the survey. The second thermal scope was trained on a section of roof adjacent to the boiler room on the second storey at the rear of the building (south east elevation).

Equipment included a Pettersson D240X time expansion detector, an Echometer Pro plugged into a mini i pad and a thermal scope (Guide TK 612).

Examination of the exterior wall of the building revealed three main exit-entry points being used by the bats. The largest number of droppings were on a window pane and on the wall above the window on the second floor at the front of the building (north-east elevation). It was evident from shining a strong torch up at the wall plate that there were numerous gaps where bats could gain entry to the building. There was a second entry/exit point used by at bat at the northeastern corner of the building. Some fresh bat droppings were recorded on the bins stored directly beneath this section of roof. A third entry point was obvious at roof level adjacent to the boiler room at the rear of the building. Gaps were visible at the top of the wall plate and there was obvious staining by bats on the exterior wall,

Bat Detector Surveys

A dusk bat detector survey was conducted on 22nd August 2025. Weather = Overcast, light breeze & dry. Temp = 16 C at sunset.

The survey commenced approximately 15 mins before sunset (Sunset = 20.45) and was conducted by a surveyor positioned at the western corner of the building. A thermal scope was trained on the northeastern elevation of the building. A second thermal scope was trained on the section of roof beside the boiler room at the rear of the building.

Three Soprano pipistrelles were recorded exiting from a gap above the window on the front (north eastern) elevation. Two soprano pipistrelles were recorded exiting from the north east corner of the building. A single Pipistrelle bat was recorded emerging from the roof beside the boiler house at the rear of the building.

Bats are currently emerging from 3 positions on the roof of the building (Figure 1).



Figure 1 – showing the 3 points where bats were recorded emerging from the building

5. EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE DEROGATION TESTS

Test 1 – Reason for derogation

(c) In the interests of public health and public safety

Members of the public are coming in contact with dead and decaying bats in the courthouse building, including in the bathrooms. This is unhygienic.

Significant numbers of Soprano pipistrelle bats are getting trapped inside the courthouse building and are dying as they cannot escape. Excluding the bat colony from this building will prevent bats getting trapped inside

Test 2 – Alternative Solutions

The “do nothing” option will result in bats continuing to get trapped in the building during the summer months. It is most likely young bats that are getting trapped.

The installation of bat boxes on the walls of the courthouse will not provide a satisfactory maternity roost site for the colony of Soprano pipistrelles.

However, 3 Schwegler 1FF bat boxes should be mounted on the rear of the building close to the exit beside the boiler room to provide temporary accommodation for bats until they find an alternative roost.

Test 3 - Impact of derogation on conservation status

The exclusion of this colony of Soprano pipistrelle bats will not have a negative impact on the conservation status of this species. Soprano pipistrelles are widespread and common throughout Ireland. Exclusion of the bats will force them to find an alternative suitable roosting site. This is a better alternative than allowing bats to perish in the building.

6. MONITORING THE IMPACTS OF THE DEROGATION

The courthouse building will be resurveyed in Summer 2026 to ensure there are no bats roosting in the building.