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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Mark Tunmore was instructed by Michael Hollinson to carry out a bat and nesting bird survey at a residential property at 15 Vivian Place, Mousehole, Cornwall, TR19 6XD. The survey was requested in preparation for a planning application to carry out a major internal and external refurbishment. The visit was carried out on 23 December 2020; the weather conditions at the time were overcast with moderate rain, mild temperatures and a westerly breeze of Beaufort Force 3.

1.2 Site description

The survey site (SW468263) consisted of a two-storey end of terrace cottage located in the centre of the coastal village of Mousehole in west Cornwall. The building was located beside a minor road in the centre of a very densely populated part of the village with terraced houses and narrow streets surrounding it. Mount's Bay was approximately 100m to the south.

The building was stone-built with rendered walls and had a pitched slate roof with a cement covering in places, which did not leave any visible gaps for roosting bats. The property was accessed on the east side by a porched entrance with glass sides. Internally there were three upstairs rooms and four downstairs room with an interlinking staircase. A small roof void was present of very approximately 2.5m high, 6m long and 6m wide, which was accessed through an open loft hatch; the internal space was further reduced by the amount of stored items present. The roof was unlined and a layer of old and deteriorating fibreglass insulation was present on the floor of the void.

The back door of the property led into a small alley with close-facing housing. White weatherboarding was present on the walls of the property on this western aspect of the building and there was a small corrugated perspex overhang above the remains of an old coal bunker outside.

Street lighting was present approximately 30m to the north and the south.



Figure 1. Main entrance to the property, eastern aspect.



Figure 2. Upper floor, eastern aspect.



Figure 3. Interior of a room on the upper floor.



Figure 4. Roof void.



Figure 5. Weatherboarding on the western aspect, upper floor.

The countryside to the north, south and west of the village consisted of a patchwork of arable and pasture fields, hedgerows and stunted trees, offering good habitat connectivity and potential for foraging bats. However, the proximity to the sea on the east side and the exposed nature of this stretch of coastline means that the location will be subject to extremely windy conditions at times. This combined with the urban

location, proximity of dense housing and associated lighting, and the absence of gardens means that the immediate area around the property has very low potential for bats.

1.3 Proposed works

It is proposed to carry out a complete internal and external refurbishment including replacing the roof, vaulting the ceiling in the rear bedroom, adding a velux to the rear bedroom, adding a shower room to the first floor with sun tube, replacing all windows, re-cladding the rear section, adding a small extension to the kitchen (incorporating the coal bunker), repairing the external rendering, re-wiring and re-plumbing.

1.4 Aims of the survey

The aims of the survey were to assess the potential for the building to support roosting bats, and to search for any evidence of use. Also to assess the suitability of the building to support nesting birds.

2. METHODS

2.1 Summary of methods

A visual survey was carried out, searching for evidence of bat use, including droppings, feeding remains, feathers, and staining from urine or grease from fur. A high-powered torch was used to examine all parts of the buildings. A visual search was also carried out for evidence of nesting birds: presence of nests, accumulation of droppings or alarm calls from birds.

2.2 Surveyor information

The survey was carried out by Mark Tunmore (Natural England license number 2015-14995-CLS-CLS), who has been a licensed bat worker since 2008 and has worked extensively upon development projects in Cornwall and other parts of the UK.

2.3 Limitations

Due to the restricted space on the street and the height of the building it was not possible to clearly view the roof from the ground. However, enough was visible to show the generally unfavourable conditions for roosting bats.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Summary

No evidence of bats or nesting birds was found.

3.2 Assessment

With reference to the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (Collins, 2016) the building is assessed as holding negligible potential for roosting bats based on the limited areas suitable for roosting and the inhospitable surroundings for bats.

4. LEGISLATION AND POLICY

4.1 Bats

As a result of the substantial declines in bat populations that have taken place over the last century bats are legally protected by domestic and European legislation. All British bats are European Protected Species (EPS), listed under Annex IV (a) of the EC Habitats Directive, receiving legal protection under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (Conservation Regulations). Additional legal protection is afforded under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000), all British Bats being listed under Schedule 5 of the Act. In combination this makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take a wild bat
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a wild bat roost (regardless of whether bats are present at the time or not)
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a wild bat while it is occupying a structure or place it uses for shelter or protection

Since 2007 it is no longer a valid defence to show that the killing, capture or disturbance of a species covered by the Conservation Regulations or the destruction or damage of their breeding sites or resting places was the incidental or unavoidable result of an otherwise lawful activity.

4.2 Nesting birds

All nests and eggs of wild birds are protected under Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and amendments).

4.3 Planning policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018 sets out government policy with regard to the consideration of biodiversity in planning decisions. The presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that would be likely to cause harm to the species or its habitat. The NPPF states that if significant harm from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

Under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 local authorities have a duty to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England when carrying out their normal functions, which includes consideration of planning applications. The England Biodiversity List was published in compliance with section 41 of the Act and includes 941 species which make up the UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species list. This includes seven of the UK's bat species (listed below).

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) is the national strategy developed in response to the Convention on Biological Diversity signed in Rio in 1992. It identified the species requiring priority action to address their causes of decline and take action to maintain and conserve their biodiversity. Listed bats are:

- Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*
- Bechstein's Bat *Myotis bechsteinii*
- Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*
- Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*
- Brown Long-eared Bat *Plecotus auritus*
- Greater Horseshoe Bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*
- Lesser Horseshoe Bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

In keeping with the national bat survey guidelines (Collins, 2016) befitting a negligible potential roost site, combined with professional judgement, no further surveys are required and works can proceed with caution.

In the unlikely event that a roosting bat is discovered during the work, the bat should be left in situ, work stopped and contact made with the bat ecologist for further advice.

If the client wishes to enhance the site for bats, features can easily be incorporated into the building to improve its suitability as a roost.

- Gaps c.2.5cm wide left behind fascia boards can be used by crevice dwelling species (such as pipistrelles).
- Purpose-made, self-contained roost features such as bat-bricks, tubes and boxes can be provided. Integrated features that are built into walls and facades of buildings are preferable to externally mounted bat boxes because they offer a permanent space for bats with little maintenance and potentially better thermal properties. Boxes should be put as high and as close to the eaves as possible in sheltered places, ideally on a south or south-westerly aspect. Further information can be found at http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/accommodating_bats_in_buildings.html

A precautionary approach to nesting birds must be adopted during building works. Birds may nest between March and September inclusive and if any nests are found within 5m of the works then work must cease until nesting has finished. The nature of the surroundings makes this unlikely, although species such as House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* will nest within roof structures and care should therefore be taken.

6. REFERENCES

Collins, J. (ed.), 2016. *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (3rd edition). Bat Conservation Trust, London.