

BAT AND BIRD ASSESSMENT

Boulders
Higher Penquite
St Breward



Client	Susannah Levers
Project reference	318/20
Surveyor and licence numbers	Samantha Smith BSc MRSB Registered Consultant RC101 2018-35700-CLS-CLS Level 3 2019-42249-CLS-CLS-1 Level 4 Barn owl: CL29/00030
Date of survey	28 April 2020
Author	Samantha Smith MRSB
Issue date	30 April 2020

Samantha Smith BSc MRSB



SUMMARY

- A bat and bird assessment of a property known as Boulders in St Breward was commissioned in April 2020. This assessment is an external inspection of the building in which the likelihood of use by protected species will be assessed.
- It is proposed to demolish the existing dormer bungalow to make way for the construction of four new dwellings.
- This visual assessment was undertaken on the 28 April 2020 by a licensed bat ecologist.
- During the assessment no evidence of bats was noted, however there are potential access gaps noted at the gable ends where the ends of the tiles are exposed. Internally there was no access as the property is occupied and this assessment was undertaken during the coronavirus pandemic. The property is considered to have low potential to support bats.
- As there was no internal access and as the property has been identified as having low potential to support roosting bats a further bat survey is recommended. This should be in the form of at least one emergence/re-entry survey during the optimum active season for bats (mid-May to August inclusive).

CONTENTS

1. Introduction	4
1.1 Background	4
1.2 Site description	4
1.3 Proposed works	5
2. Legislation	6
2.1 Bats	6
2.2 Nesting birds	6
2.3 Planning authority	6
3. Survey Methodology	7
3.1 Visual assessment	7
3.2 Limitations	7
4. Survey Results	8
5. Recommendations	9
5.1 Bats	9
5.2 Birds	9
6. References	10

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

A bat and bird visual assessment of Boulders, Higher Penquite, St Breward was commissioned in April 2020. This is in relation to a proposed demolition of the property and the construction of four new builds.

The assessment is an external inspection of the building in which the likelihood of use by protected species will be assessed; it will also inform any requirements for further surveys and/or for mitigation.

1.2 Site description

The property is located in the village of Higher Penquite, St Breward on Bodmin Moor at OS Grid Reference SX097762. The dormer bungalow has hardstanding to the front and to the south and west there are domestic gardens mainly laid to lawn with trees and planted borders. To the east is a farm track and public right of way. The village consists of a number of domestic properties of varying age and architectural styles.

The surrounding area consists of agricultural fields bound by Cornish hedgerows. There are a number of quarries in the area with some containing standing water. To the west is the sheltered wooded valley of the River Camel. The area will provide excellent commuting and foraging opportunities for bats and barn owls.



Figure 1 Location Map



Figure 2 Aerial Photo showing location of Boulders

1.3 Proposed works

It is proposed to demolish the existing dormer bungalow to make way for the construction of four new builds.

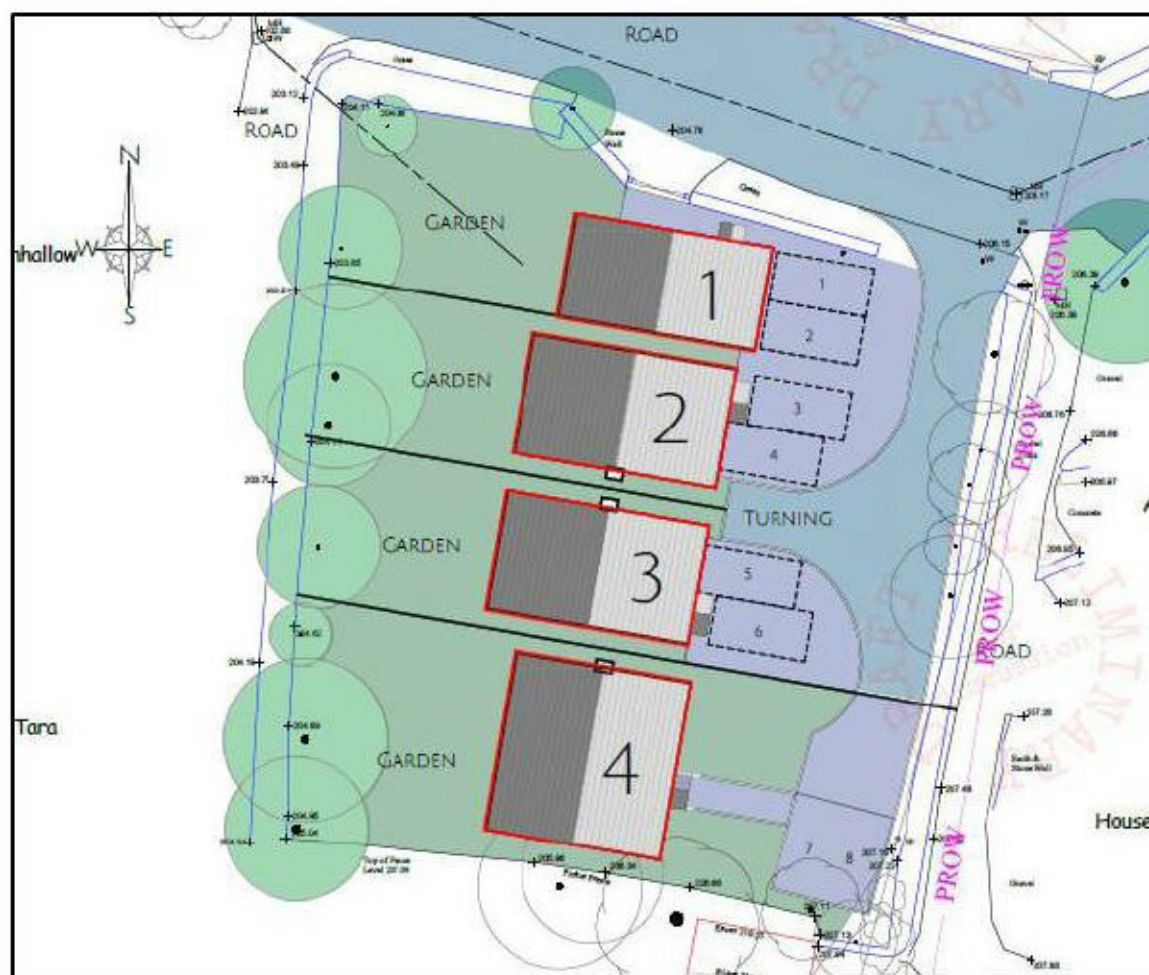


Figure 2 Proposed site plan

2. LEGISLATION

2.1 Bats

All species of bat are classed as European Protected Species (EPS) and are legally protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. This legislation implements the European Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora 1992 (referred to as the 'Habitats Directive').

Bats and their roosts are also legally protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Several bat species are also UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority species and receive additional legal protection under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

In combination, this makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately, capture, injure or kill a bat.
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost, or deliberately disturb a group of bats
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a bat roost (a bat roost is interpreted as any structure or place which is used for shelter or protection, regardless of whether bats are present at the time)
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
- Possess, control, transport or sell or exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat

Bat ecologists are required to assess the significance of the bat roost and the scale of impact. Works involving significant disturbance or roost destruction (including changes to the roost) will require an EPS licence before the work can lawfully commence. Natural England is the licensing authority in England.

For further information and advice contact Natural England on 0845 601 4523 (local rate).

2.2 Nesting birds

The nests and eggs of all wild birds are protected against taking, damage and destruction under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Barn owls are given greater protection against disturbance while breeding under Schedule 1 of the Act.

2.3 Planning authority

If further bat surveys are recommended, these will need to be completed before the Local Planning Authority will be able to make a decision on the planning application. Appropriate mitigation will be required within the proposals.

3. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

3.1 Visual assessment

The assessment of the building and surrounding habitat for bats, barn owls and other nesting birds was undertaken on the 28 April 2020 by Samantha Smith MRSB Natural England Registered Consultant 101 with survey licences 2018-35700-CLS-CLS Level 3, 2019-42249-CLS-CLS-1 Level 4 (Bats) and CL29/00030 (Barn owl). It was a wet and overcast day with a light breeze (BF2) and a temperature of 11C.

Due to current restrictions relating to the coronavirus pandemic there was no entry into the property as it is occupied.

An external search was systematically made paying attention to potential roosting areas and access points such as lintels, hanging tiles, weather boarding, lead flashing, eaves and any cracks and crevices.

Equipment available for the assessment includes:

- high powered lamp (1,000 lumen)
- binoculars
- telescopic ladders
- endoscope
- FLIR ONE thermal imaging camera

A preliminary assessment involves searching for live/dead bats, barn owls and other birds *in situ*, and evidence of use, such as droppings, pellets, staining, liming, feathers and feeding remains. The potential of the building to support protected species is also considered and any features thought suitable for use by bats or barn owls noted.

For the purpose of this assessment bat roosting potential for the building will be categorised using the system in Table 1.

Table 1. Bat roosting potential categories

Confirmed roost	Bats recorded roosting within the structure
High potential	Significant roosting potential due to the presence of many suitable and optimal features for roosting bats
Medium potential	A number of features suitable for roosting bats and/or good connectivity to suitable foraging habitat
Low/No potential	A few sub-optimal features or no features suitable for roosting bats

3.2 Limitations

A single day time visit can only record evidence found and provide information on the potential for a building to support bats or other protected species. As bats are highly mobile and will move roosts on a daily, seasonal or yearly basis it is recommended that this report is valid for a year from the date of the assessment.

As per government restrictions and guidance due to the coronavirus pandemic there was no access internally. However, as this is a dormer bungalow there is no roof void and the space at the eaves is used for storage therefore there would be no areas to inspect internally.

4. SURVEY RESULTS

Boulders is a dormer bungalow constructed from brick and block work which is for the majority of the building is externally rendered. It is assumed that there are cavity walls present but unknown if these are insulated. The roof consists of concrete tiles. There is a conservatory area on the west elevation and a flat roof garage on the east. There are UPVC fascia's and soffits in place and these appear to be well sealed.

The only areas identified as having potential access for bats were at the gable on the west elevation where there are some gaps at the end of the roof tiles (Figure 4) and possibly around lead flashing of the chimney and skylights.



Figure 4 Gaps in roof tiles



Figure 5 Rear with flat roof garage

Boulders is considered to have low potential to support bats due small number of suitable access points identified.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Bats

The property known as Boulders is considered to have low potential to support bats due to the limited potential access points and sub optimal roosting features. There are gaps under the roof tiles which may provide roosting areas between the tiles and the underfelt.

Further surveys are therefore recommended to determine whether or not bats are present within this property. This should be in the form of a single emergence/re-entry survey during the active season for bats (mid-May to August). This single survey carried out at a suitable time and in suitable weather conditions will be sufficient to confirm a negative result (Collins, 2016).

If bats are found to be roosting within the property further surveys will be required for roost characterisation and to apply for a licence if required.

5.2 Birds

No barn owls (*Tyto alba*) or evidence of barn owls was found at the time of the survey. The property is not suitable for barn owls (no suitable access) therefore provision for barn owl is not considered necessary for this development.

No evidence of nesting birds was noted during the assessment. If the works are to be carried out within the bird breeding season (March to September) the building should be searched as fully as possible for nesting birds. If nesting birds are present, works should not commence and further advice sought as the nests and eggs of all wild birds are protected against taking, damage or destruction under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

6. REFERENCES

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

Habitats Directive (1992) Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

Mitchell-Jones, A J & McLeish, A P., (Edits) (1999). The Bat Workers' Manual (3rd Edition). Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. HMSO, London.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006. HMSO, London.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). HMSO, London.