

# BAT AND BIRD PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

**Outbuilding**  
**Higher Lezerea Farm**  
**Porkellis**  
**TR13 0HP**



Client	Bamble Design
Project reference	351/21
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	5 March 2021
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Issue date	16 March 2021

## SUMMARY

- A bat and bird preliminary roost assessment of an outbuilding at Higher Lezerea Farm near Helston was commissioned in February 2021. This assessment is an internal and external inspection of the property in which the likelihood of use by protected species will be assessed.
- It is proposed to convert the outbuilding to provide studio space for the owner.
- This visual assessment was undertaken on the 5 March 2021 by a licensed bat ecologist. It was an overcast but dry day with an air temperature of 8C and a moderate breeze (BF4).
- During the assessment no evidence of use by bats was noted within the structure, there were a number of suitable access points but limited areas for roosting. The outbuilding is considered to have low potential to support bats.
- No further bat surveys are required for the current proposed conversion.
- No evidence of barn owls was noted but potential for nesting birds was present and a number of birds were seen flying within and around the outbuilding. Mitigation measures have been provided to ensure nesting birds are not disturbed.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

A bat and bird Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of an outbuilding at Higher Lezerea Farm, Porkellis, near Helston was commissioned in February 2021. This is in relation to a conversion to use as a studio. The assessment is an internal and external inspection of the property 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 in a rural area to the west of the village of Porkellis at OS Grid Reference SW684336. The barn is located within the grounds of Higher Lezerea Farm which is positioned within a small cluster of properties at the end of the private track.

The surrounding land use is predominantly arable and permanent pasture. The River Cober is to the east and the valley has areas of woodland and scrub and some standing water. There is a good network of hedgerows which provides good connectivity to these habitats.

The surrounding area provides good commuting and foraging opportunities for bats and barn owls.

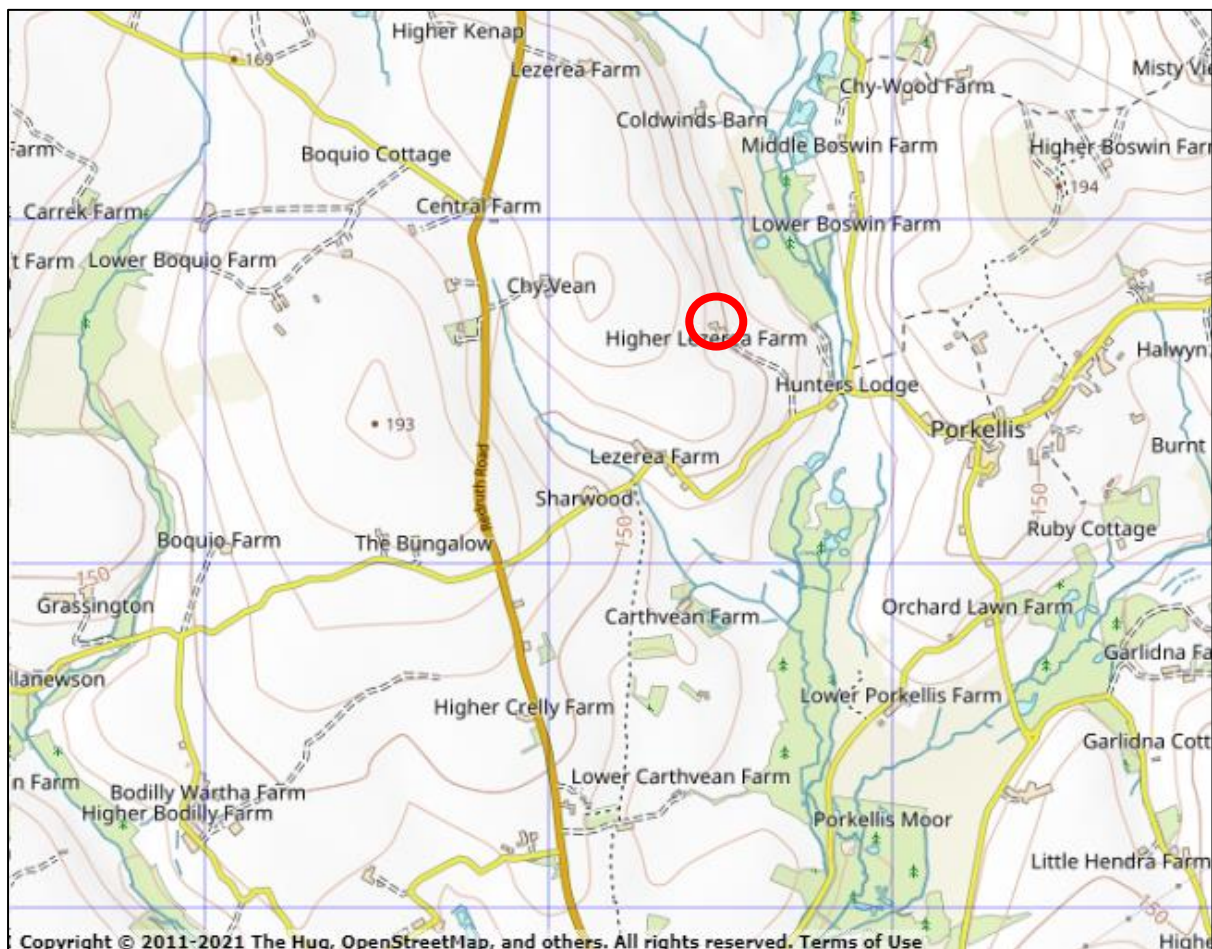


Figure 1 Location map





Figure 2 Aerial photo showing the location of the outbuilding

### 1.3 Proposed works

It is proposed to convert the main open section of the outbuilding to provide a studio space for the owner.

## **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 2017 (as amended). 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 5 March 2021 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 an overcast but dry day with an air temperature of 8C and a moderate breeze (BF4).

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. The interior was then examined in a similar manner looking at the roof structure, walls, floor spaces and any stored items.

Equipment available for the assessment includes:

- high powered lamp (1,000 lumen)
- binoculars
- telescopic ladders
- RIDGID CA-350 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.

#### 4. SURVEY RESULTS

The outbuilding at Higher Lezerea Farm is a traditional barn constructed from local granite. The barn is split into two distinct sections, the western section is open fronted to the south and has a corrugated metal roof. This area is used for storage.

The eastern section is two storeys with the upper floor used as an office and the lower floor used as a pantry/store. This has a slate roof which is underlined with a modern roofing membrane and has vaulted ceilings in place.

No evidence of bats was noted in either section. There were a number of butterfly and moth wings alongside mice droppings therefore these are considered feeding remains from mice and not bats.



Figure 3 Eastern end with office above and pantry below

Externally the stonework is relatively well sealed other than a couple of holes, these did not appear to lead anywhere when inspected closely. There is a wooden fascia on the rear of the building and the front of the two storey section, this is slightly offset from the wall and leads to the area at the wall tops. No evidence of use by bats was noted in these areas. The building is considered to have low potential to support roosting bats.

A number of birds were seen flying within and around the outbuilding and although no nests were noted there is potential for the interior of the open section to be used by nesting birds.



## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Bats

No evidence of use by bats was noted during the assessment of the outbuilding at Higher Lezerea Farm and the building is considered to have low potential to support bats. The conversion works can commence without the need for further bat surveys.

However, care should still be taken during the proposed works as bats could roost unseen within the structure, in particular between the roofing sheets and under slates. If any bats are discovered during the work they must not be handled: works must stop immediately and advice sought from the bat ecologist (07919 923 468) or The Bat Conservation Trust (0345 1300 228).

Best working practices have been included below to ensure all contractors are prepared in case a bat is discovered.

#### Prior to works

- Make a copy of this report available on site at all times for contractors to follow. Contractors must read the recommendations in full before commencing works.
- Before work commences in each area, thoroughly check possible roosting places and all accessible areas where works are to take place. Searching should include looking for bats tucked up at the ridge beam and at the wall tops. If bats are noted works should be postponed and the bat ecologist contacted.

#### During works

- Work with caution, remain vigilant and check for the presence of bats throughout works. Wear gloves at all times.
- Please note that bats are very small and may be hidden:
  - within narrow crevices in roof beams
  - in crevices in brick and stonework
  - between roofing sheets and under slates
- If a bat is found the bat ecologist should be contacted immediately and all works in that area halted until advice has been sought.

### 5.2 Birds

No barn owls (*Tyto alba*) or evidence of barn owls was found at the time of the survey. The surrounding area does provide suitable foraging habitat however the building does not offer any potential to support barn owl, mitigation is therefore not required for this development.

Potential for nesting birds was noted within the outbuilding. The nests and eggs of all wild birds are protected against taking, damage or destruction under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

The following mitigation should be undertaken:

- Prior to any works alternative nest boxes should be provided on site. These boxes can be made on site or purchased on-line.
- To avoid disturbing nesting birds the works should ideally be undertaken outside of the breeding season (between October and February).
- A pre-commencement check should be undertaken to ensure that there are no birds present.

### **5.3 Enhancement**

If you wish to promote wildlife it is possible to provide roosting opportunities for bats and barn owls on site. This can be in the form of purpose made boxes attached to the structure of the building or located on a tree. Bat boxes are commercially available and can be purchased from a number of retailers online. Information on Barn Owl boxes can be found on the Barn Owl Trust website: <https://www.barnowltrust.org.uk/barn-owl-nestbox/>

## 6. REFERENCES

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

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