ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
BUILDING AT SUSTAINABLE FURNITURE, GOONVEAN INDUSTRIAL ESTATE
ST STEPHEN

March 2021

COMMISSIONED BY SUSTAINABLE FURNITURE [UK] LTD.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- J.L Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Sustainable Furniture [UK] Ltd. to carry out an Ecological Impact Assessment of an industrial storage shed / warehouse and adjacent habitats at Goonvean Industrial Estate, Drinnick Road, St Stephen, Saint Austell, Cornwall, PL26 7QF.

- The survey was commissioned to inform any possible ecological impacts resulting from a planning application for a replacement storage shed / warehouse; and was carried out on the 18th March 2021 by Joseph Lane BSc [Hons], who is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and holder of a Natural England bat licence.

- Survey methodology comprised an internal and external building inspection and ecological assessment of the adjacent habitats.

- The proposed development will not affect the favourable conservation status of any local bat population. No signs of bats were associated with any element of the structures to be affected; no inaccessible crevice dwelling opportunities were identified.

- No signs of nesting birds were associated with the building.

INTRODUCTION

J.L Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Sustainable Furniture [UK] Ltd. to carry out an Ecological Impact Assessment of an industrial storage shed / warehouse and adjacent habitats at Goonvean Industrial Estate, Drinnick Road, St Stephen, Saint Austell, Cornwall, PL26 7QF.

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SITE DESCRIPTION

The survey area comprised a detached block-built warehouse with a part pitched unlined slate roof [south-west section] and part corrugated cement-fiber roof; and adjacent habitats. The building was situated centrally between St Stephen and Nanpean, directly adjacent to Goonvean China Clay Works.

Figure 1. Building viewed from the south-east

The site is located at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SW 951 550.

METHODOLOGY

DESK STUDY

A desktop data search to identify statutory designated sites and records of protected species within 1km of the site was carried out using the government's MAGIC *Nature on the Map* website. Aerial photographs were also interpreted.

BATS

BUILDING INSPECTION:

A daytime site visit was carried out to identify potential roost sites associated with the building to be affected by the proposed development. The exterior and interior of the building were examined for signs of occupation by bats (urine staining, fur rubbing and droppings) and suitable crevices and features noted. *A high-powered torch, endoscope and ladder were available*.

The adjacent habitats were assessed for their foraging and commuting suitability. Methodology in accordance with *Bat Surveys, Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd edition (2016) – Bat Conservation Trust.*

BIRDS

The exterior and interior of the building were surveyed for signs of use by nesting birds and the adjacent habitats assessed for their breeding bird suitability.

HABITATS

The adjacent habitats were assessed for their ecological value and potential to support protected species.

LIMITATIONS

It should be noted that this survey takes no account of seasonal differences and a lack of signs of any particular species does not confirm its absence, merely that there was no indication of its presence at the time of survey.

If no action or development of this land takes place within twelve months of the date of this survey, then the findings of this survey will no longer be considered reliable and should be repeated.

RESULTS

DESK STUDY

6.1 TABLE 1. STATUTORY SITES SITUATED WITHIN 1KM OF SW 951 550.

Site Name	Grid Reference	Area (ha)	Description	Status
ST AUSTELL CLAY PITS	SW 944 551	0.61	SITE OF INTERNATIONALLY IMPORTANT WESTERN RUSTWORT	SSSI
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TREGARGUS QUARRIES	SW 949 541	1.8	GEOLOGICAL	SSSI

The site is not situated within any of the above statutory sites but does falls within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone but does not match any corresponding development descriptions.

BATS

BUILDING INSPECTION

No signs of bats were associated with any internal or external elements of the building.

Figures 2 & 3. Interior view of [pitched slate] roof void; building viewed from the north

BIRDS
No signs of nesting birds were associated with the building.

HABITATS
The building was situated within an industrial yard; directly to the north-west of the building ran an access road with a vegetated china clay spoil heap to the north. Woody species included willow *Salix* sp., gorse *Ulex europaeus,* holly *Ilex aquifolium* and butterfly-bush *buddleja davidii;* ground flora was dominated by ivy *Hedera helix* with locally dominant bramble *Rubus fruticosus* scrub.

LEGISLATION AND SPECIES INFORMATION

BIRDS
All British birds, their nests and eggs [with certain exceptions] are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 as amended. This makes it an offence to: intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird; intentionally damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

BATS
All bat species and their roost sites are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended and are included in Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 and amended by the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 (the Habitats Regulations). Under UK law a bat roost is "any structure or place which any wild [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 at the time. Microchiroptera (the insectivorous species of bat found in the UK) are able to exploit a wide diversity of roost sites such as caves, trees, tunnels, mines and buildings. Species which have adapted to utilise buildings as alternative roost sites make use of various parts of the building including hollow walls, roof spaces and areas above soffit boarding, behind weatherboarding and under hanging tiles; habitats which can be replicated when designing mitigation measures. It is important to note that individual roosts are not usually occupied all year round, as bat colonies move frequently (depending upon the species). The same site, however, does tend to be occupied at the same time each year.

RECOMMENDATION AND MITIGATION

DESK STUDY
No statutory sites would be affected by the proposals.

BATS
The proposed development will not affect the favourable conservation status of any local bat population. No signs of bats were associated with any element of the structures to be affected; occasional lifted slates were inspected from the ground with a high-powered torch and binoculars with no bats or evidence of previous use observed. No further surveys are deemed necessary.

Bats are a dynamic species and capable of occupying a suitable crevice at any time outside of the winter hibernation period [November - March]; as a precaution contractors will be made aware that features suitable for roosting bats are associated with the roof, and in the unlikely event a bat is discovered, all work in the vicinity will cease and a licensed bat ecologist consulted.

The vegetated spoil heap, to the north-west of the building, provided a limited amount of sub-optimal foraging habitat; external lighting [associated with the north-west elevation] should be avoided to minimise any potential disturbance.

BIRDS
No nesting birds would be affected by the proposed works.

HABITATS
No other protected species or habitats would be affected by the proposed plans.

External elevations have the potential to incorporate bird boxes. Such features would enhance the potential ecological value of the site.

Figures 4 & 5. Indicative bird box types - Schwegler Sparrow Terrace [left]; Swift eaves box [double] - Peat boxes.co.uk [right]

APPENDIX – NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

Below are exerts within the NPPF of how the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

Paragraph 170

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

Paragraph 174

To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:
a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity56; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation57; and
b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Paragraph 175

When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:
a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting 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;
b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons58 and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Paragraph 176

The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:
a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites59; and
c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

Paragraph 177

The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment because of its potential impact on a habitats site is being planned or determined.

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