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DOWNINNEY MANOR WARBSTOW CORNWALL

Bat & Nesting Bird Survey

AUGUST 2021

A REPORT TO:

Mr P Soloman
Downinney Manor
Warbstow
Cornwall
PL15 8UR

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Executive Summary

Penpont Ecology Services Ltd was commissioned to undertake a Bat and Nesting Bird Survey at Downinney Manor, Warbstow, Cornwall, PL15 8UR. This was carried out to support a planning application to make alterations to the existing building.

The survey comprised a desk study, building inspection and a dusk emergence survey.

Conclusions

Bats

One Common Pipistrelle bat was identified emerging from underneath lead flashing at the west chimney stack, and one Brown Long-eared bat was identified emerging from underneath wooden fascias at the south elevation.

It is concluded that the bat emergence points are outside of the area of proposed works and shall not provide a constraint to the proposed works being undertaken. However, if more extensive roof works are planned these shall be carried out under supervision of a licensed bat ecologist.

Nesting Birds

It is concluded that nesting birds are absent from Downinney Manor, and these species shall not provide any constraint to the proposed works being undertaken.

Downinney Manor – Bat & Nesting Bird Survey

1 Introduction

Penpont Ecology Services Ltd was appointed by Mr P Soloman to undertake a Bat & Nesting Bird Survey at Downinney Manor, Warbstow, Cornwall, PL15 8UR. This was carried out to support a planning application to make alterations to the existing building. The Bat & Nesting Bird Survey was undertaken to determine presence/likely absence of bat and nesting bird species and to assess the impact the proposed works may have on any species found to be present.

In England and Wales all bat species are fully protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (amendment (EU Exit)) Regulations 2019, and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is illegal to:

- intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (or take) bats.
- deliberately disturb a bat in a way that would affect its ability to survive, breed or rear young (or hibernate or migrate in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) or (significantly in England, Wales and Scotland) affect the local distribution or abundance of the species.
- recklessly disturb roosting bats or obstruct access to their roosts.
- damage or destroy a roost (this is an 'absolute' offence and need not be deliberate or intentional).
- possess, control, transport, sell, exchange or offer for sale/exchange any live or dead bat or any part of a bat.

** In a court, 'deliberately' will probably be interpreted as someone who, although not intending to capture/injure or kill a bat, performed the relevant action, being sufficiently informed and aware of the consequence his/her action will most likely have.*

Some bat species (Barbastelle, Bechstein's, Soprano Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared, Greater and Lesser Horseshoes) are included on the S41 list of UK Biodiversity Action Plan species. Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, local authorities must consider the conservation of these species in planning decisions.

All nesting birds are protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981. Barn Owls are specially protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, making it an offence to;

- intentionally kill, injure or take them
- take, damage or destroy their nest or eggs
- disturb them at the nest

2 Site Description

Downinney Manor is located 580m south of Warbstow at OS Grid Reference: SX 2098 9021 (Fig 1). The building occupies a rural location, with a tributary of the River Ottery located 470m to the east. The surrounding countryside is in agricultural production of permanent pasture, grass leys and arable. Fields are bordered by typical Cornish

hedgebanks providing good connectivity with surrounding riparian habitats associated with tributaries of the River Ottery (Fig 2).

Downinney Manor is of traditional stone construction (Fig 3)



Fig 1 – OS Map of location (1:25 000)

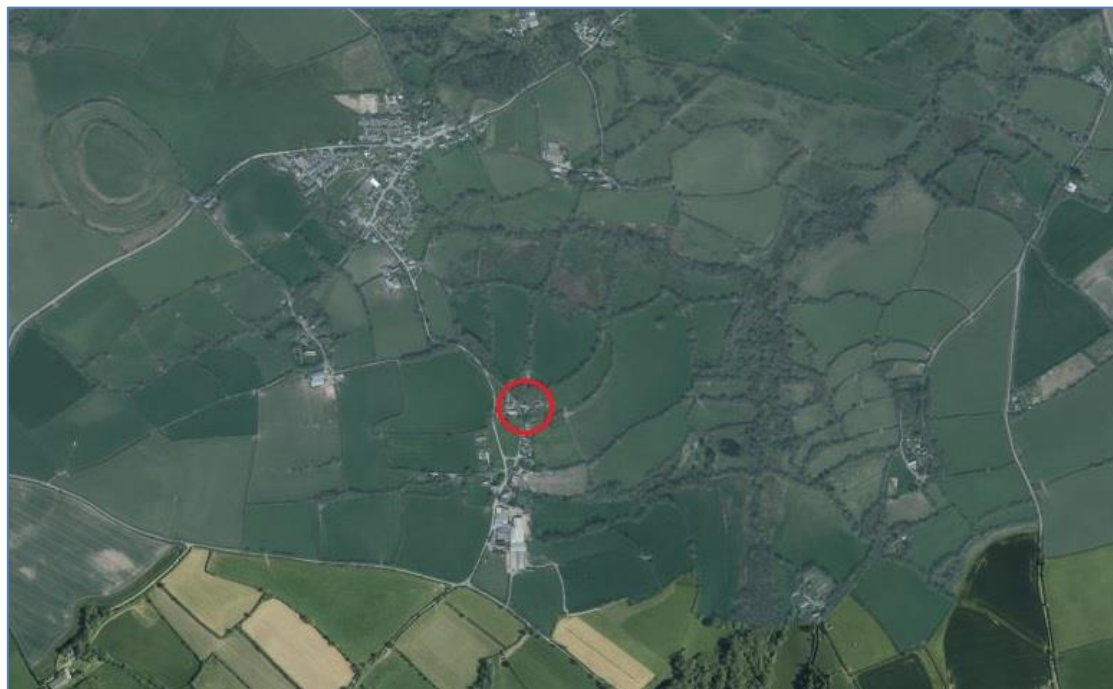


Fig 2 – Aerial photograph showing surrounding land-use.



Fig 3 – Downinney Manor.

3 Survey Methodology

3.1 Desk Study

A search of local records was made to identify any previous records of bats and Barn owls in the area.

3.2 Nesting Birds

Downinney Manor and its surrounding environs, were surveyed for Barn Owls, and nesting birds, using methodologies outlined by Natural England (2002) and the Barn Owl Trust (2012), and included looking for:

- Individuals, corpses, feathers, droppings and pellets
- Nests & potential nesting sites

3.3 Bats

The bat survey was conducted in accordance with guidelines given by Natural England and the Bat Conservation Trust in *'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines'* (Collins, 2016) and *'Bat Worker's Manual'* (Mitchell-Jones, 1999). The bat survey was carried out to determine presence/likely absence of bat species, and comprised a building inspection, and a dusk emergence survey.

The building inspection included:

- an inspection (with a high powered torch where necessary) of the eaves, ridge beams and hips, and any other likely building habitat for bats; for signs of bats and individuals
- examination of walls and floors for droppings, dead individuals and skeletons
- a search for signs of bats including oily stains at entrance/exit holes, feeding remains, lack of cobwebs, characteristic smells and sounds
- an inspection of the surrounding area for suitable habitats.

The dusk emergence survey included:

- experienced surveyors watching from pre-determined strategic locations (opposing corners of the building) for bats emerging from any potential access points
- the survey beginning 15 minutes before sunset and continuing for 90 minutes thereafter
- surveyors carrying hand-held bat detectors (Elekon Batscanner) and recording devices (Anabat Express) to capture any bat calls heard

4 Survey Results

4.1 Desk study

Barn Owls

Table 1: Records of Barn Owls within 10km

Location	Date	Distance	Recorder
Canworthy Water	1991-2009	Within 10km	BTO* & BOT*

* British Trust for Ornithology

* Barn Owl Trust

Barn Owls (and other owl species) require mixed farmland with rough grazing, and habitat suitable for their food source, ie. small mammals. Barn Owls commonly nest in tall, mature trees and in the eaves of larger, older agricultural buildings (BOT, 2012).

A search of local records identified Barn Owls within 10km of the site, made by the British Trust for Ornithology and the Barn Owl Trust.

It is considered likely that the wider surrounding countryside provides suitable habitat for nesting and foraging Barn Owls.

Bats

The desk study identified the following records of Bats:

Table 2: Records of bats within 5km

Species	Location	Date	Distance	Recorder
Pipistrelle sp. (<i>Pipistrellus sp.</i>)	Troswell	2010	5km	*ERCCIS
Long-eared sp. (<i>Plecotus sp.</i>)	Badgall	2015	5km	*ERCCIS
Lesser Horseshoe (<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>)	Nr Badgall	1999	5km	*ERCCIS

*Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (ERCCIS)

The Desk Study has identified three species of bat recorded within 5km of the site. It is considered likely that the surrounding countryside provides suitable habitat for foraging and roosting bats.

4.2 Site Survey

Downinney Manor is a two-storey detached house of traditional stone construction with a natural slate roof. There are two brick-built chimney stacks with lead flashing at the base. The roof has slate verges, and wooden fascia boarding carrying plastic guttering throughout. Modern additions include replacement uPVC double glazed windows. At the east elevation is a single-storey extension of traditional stone construction with a natural slate roof. The building is in good condition with some gaps at raised roof tiles, wooden fascias, and at raised flashing around chimney stacks providing potential access points for bats and nesting birds.

The loft was accessed via a hatch over the first floor landing. The roof has a simple timber trussed rafter frame and is unlined. Insulation material is laid between the floor joists. The ridges are heavily cobwebbed, and no evidence of bat presence was identified.

Due to records of bats within the locality, and potential access points identified at the roof, raised flashing, and wooden fascias, it was determined that a dusk emergence survey would be undertaken.

The results of the emergence survey may be summarised as follows:

Table 3: Results of Emergence Survey 16 August 2021

Date of Survey: 16/08/21			
Type of Survey: Sunset/Emergence			
Sunset Time: 2036			
Weather Conditions: 100% cloud cover. Still & dry.			
Start Time: 2021		Finish Time: 2151	
Start Temp: 16°C		Finish Temp: 16°C	
Time	Species Recorded	Emerging?	Behaviour/Notes
2055-2105	Common Pipistrelle	No	Foraging over surrounding habitats.

2105	1 x Common Pipistrelle	Yes	Emerged from underneath raised flashing at west chimney stack
2110	1 x Brown Long-eared	Yes	Emerged from underneath wooden fascias at south elevation
2111-2130	Common Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared, & Noctule	No	Foraging over surrounding habitats.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Bats

One Common Pipistrelle was identified emerging from underneath lead flashing at the base of the west chimney stack, and one Brown Long-eared bat was identified emerging from underneath external fascia boarding at the front of the building – south elevation (Fig 4).

Common Pipistrelle bat species are common and widespread throughout the UK. Pipistrelle bats are known to form maternity roosts in new and old buildings during the summer months. Maternity roost sizes normally comprise between 50 and 75 females. The males usually roost away from the maternity roost either singularly or in small numbers (Bat Conservation Trust, 2020). It is considered that the single Common Pipistrelle bat seen to emerge from the building is a non-breeding individual.

Brown Long-eared bats are also common and widespread throughout the UK. They are commonly found in older houses or buildings that have a loft void that they may use as summer maternity roost sites. However, non-breeding bats occasionally roost away from the breeding colony, in the gaps and crevices favoured by true-crevice dwelling species such as Pipistrelles. Maternity colonies of this species are typically between 10 and 20 females (Bat Conservation Trust, 2020). It is considered that the single Brown Long-eared bat seen to emerge from underneath external fascia boarding is a bachelor male, or non-breeding female.

It is concluded that the bat emergence points are outside of the area of proposed works (eastern elevation of the building) and shall not provide a constraint to the proposed works being undertaken. However, if more extensive roof works are planned these shall be carried out under supervision of a licensed bat ecologist.

5.2 Nesting Birds

It is concluded that nesting birds are absent from Downinney Manor, and these species shall not provide any constraint to the proposed works being undertaken.



Fig 4 – Bat emergence points – south elevation.

6 References

Barn Owl Trust (2012). *Barn Owl Conservation Handbook*, Pelagic Publishing, Exeter.

Collins, J. (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines* 3rd Edition.

Mitchell-Jones, A J & McLeish, A P., (Edits) (1999). *The Bat Workers' Manual*. JNCC Peterborough.

Mitchell-Jones, A J (2004). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.

This report has been produced in good faith, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence based on the information provided and accessible at the time of its preparation and within the scope of the work agreed with the client.

We disclaim any responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of the above.

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