

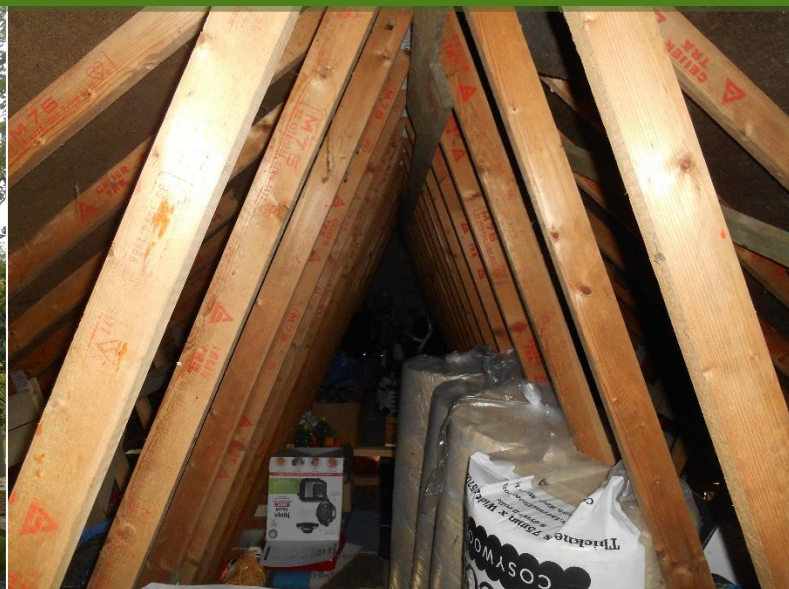


Cumberland House, West Pennard

Bat & Bird Survey Report

Prepared for: Helen & Craig Barrow

Date: September 2023



This report has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

Limitations

Nash Ecology has prepared this Report for the sole use of Helen Barrow (“Client”) in accordance with the Agreement under which our services were performed.

The conclusions and recommendations contained in this Report are based upon information provided by others and upon the assumption that all relevant information has been provided by those parties from whom it has been requested and that such information is accurate.

The methodology adopted and the sources of information used by Nash Ecology in providing its services are outlined in this Report. The work described in this Report was undertaken during August 2023 and is based on the conditions encountered and the information available during the said period of time.

Nash Ecology disclaim any undertaking or obligation to advise any person of any change in any matter affecting the Report, which may come or be brought to Nash Ecology attention after the date of the Report.

This report is considered ‘valid’ for up to two years from the date the walkover survey was conducted. If an application is made after this, then it is advisable to undertake an updated survey. In addition, any significant change to the project should result in consultation with an ecologist as reassessment of the ecological constraints may be required.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Scope

Nash Ecology Ltd was instructed to carry out a bat and bird assessment of an outbuilding (i.e. the Outbuilding) located within the curtilage of ‘Cumberland House, Newtown, West Pennard, BA6 8NN’ (Figure 1). The assessment was commissioned in relation to proposals to convert the Outbuilding into ancillary living space (which includes works to the existing roof). As the works will be restricted to the footprint of the existing building and its immediate surrounds (i.e. hard standing), the ecological receptors most likely to be encountered are bats and birds. As the proposed works have the potential to adversely affect both taxa, a targeted assessment was commissioned to ascertain whether either were present.

Figure 1: Site Location (Google Earth, 2020)



1.2 Legislation and Planning Policy Summary

1.2.1 Summary of Legislation Pertinent to Bats

All bats are protected under Schedule 2 the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). When taken together it is illegal to:

- Deliberately disturb, capture, injure or kill a bat;
- Obstruct, damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time); and
- Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part thereof.

Seven species of bat are included on Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 as 'Species of Principal Importance for Conservation in England'. These include:

- Barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*);
- Bechstein's bat (*Myotis bechsteinii*);
- Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*);
- Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*);
- Brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*);
- Greater horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*); and
- Lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*).

Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 places a duty of care on competent authorities to consider biodiversity as a material consideration when discharging their normal functions.

1.2.2 Summary of Legislation Pertinent to Birds

Nesting birds are protected through their inclusion on the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under the Act, it is an offence to harm a bird, its eggs or young whilst occupying a nest. For those species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb a bird that is on or near an 'active' nest.

Forty-nine species of birds are listed on Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 as 'Species of Principal Importance for Conservation in England'.

1.2.3 Planning Policy Summary

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 was considered in the preparation of this report. The NPPF specifies the obligations that the Local Authorities and the UK Government have regarding statutory designated sites and protected species under UK and international legislation and how this is to be delivered in the planning system. Protected or notable habitats and species should be considered as a material consideration in planning decisions and may therefore make some sites unsuitable for particular types of development. If the development is permitted, mitigation measures may be required to avoid or minimise impacts on certain habitats and species, or where impact is unavoidable, compensation may be required.

2 METHODS

2.1 Desk-based Study

A desk-based study was carried out to identify designated sites and biological records relating to the site. The Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was consulted to identify statutory sites within 2 km. The MAGIC website was also used to review granted bat mitigation licences (EPSML) within 1 km and the past five years. In both cases, the search was based on grid reference ST 546 385.

2.2 Field Survey

2.2.1 Preliminary Roost Appraisal

A Natural England-(Class 2)-licensed bat ecologist undertook a full inspection (both external and internal) of the Outbuilding on 17th August 2023. During the survey, the surveyor inspected the Outbuilding for exterior roosting locations and possible access points to the building’s interior. Such features were accessed and inspected for signs of use using an endoscope. An internal inspection for suitable roost locations and evidence of bat occupancy (such as droppings, urine spots, an absence of cobwebs and bats themselves) was then undertaken.

As bats are a cryptic group and often move between roosts, both within and between years, their presence is not always easy to detect. The Outbuilding was assessed for its Bat Roost Potential (BRP), following published guidance (BCT, 2016). The BRP categories are provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Bat Roost Potential Categories (BCT, 2016 and Mitchell-Jones, 2004)

Roost Potential	Description
Known or Confirmed	Confirmed signs of bat presence/ occupation (droppings, oily staining around entry points, insect remains, odour, scratching) and actual bat presence.
High	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.
Moderate	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation). A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.
Negligible	No features suitable for roosting bats. Includes structures constructed from unsuitable materials e.g. prefabricated with steel and sheet material. Structure is draughty, light and cool buildings with no roosting opportunities. High levels of regular disturbance including external lighting. Building is isolated for areas of foraging habitat. In the case of trees, no

Roost Potential	Description
	potential roosting features are present, or features have no potential to support roosting bats.

2.2.2 Bat Activity Survey

An activity survey was undertaken in line with published guidance (Mitchell-Jones, 2004; BCT, 2016). The survey involved a single dusk emergence survey, which utilised two surveyors (both of whom were Natural England-licensed bat ecologists). The surveyors observed possible access points (identified during the initial inspection) during a key period (15 minutes prior to sunset and ended at least 1.5 hours after dusk). The surveyors were equipped with a specialist bat detector with recording capability (Batlogger M) and night vision aids (Canon XA40 camera). Where encountered, areas of significant bat activity were also recorded. The survey was undertaken during suitable environmental conditions on 30th August 2023.

All recorded bat calls were analysed using BatExplorer (Batlogger) software following the survey. Calls were identified to species level where appropriate.

2.2.3 Initial Bird Inspection

Concurrent with the bat inspection, the Outbuilding was inspected for evidence of nesting birds.

2.3 Survey Limitations

The survey was undertaken late in the survey but within the approved period. The features of interest only suited to supporting individual bats rather than larger breeding colonies. As such, no constraints to the aims of the survey were encountered.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk-based Study

No statutory designated sites were identified within 2 km of the Site.

No historical EPSML was identified within 1 km.

The Site was not located in a Bat Consultation Zone (BCZ).

3.2 Site Setting

The Site was located within the village of Newtown in West Pennard. The Site was bordered by further residential properties to the east and west and by the A361 road to the south (beyond which were residential properties). Open farmland was located to the north. The A361 did not include street lighting near to the Site.

3.3 Field Survey

3.3.1 Preliminary Roost Appraisal

House

The detached Outbuilding was located to the northeast of the main house. The walls were constructed from block and were rendered externally (Plates 1 – 3). Doors were present in the northern and eastern aspects and windows were present in the southern and western aspects. Intact, wooden soffit boxes were present at the wall tops with which they were flush. The roof was pitched and clad in pan tiles. For the most part, these pan tiles were flush with one another; however, a small number of tiles were slightly raised providing crawled access to the space beneath (Plate 4). The apex tiles were well sealed. A small, open-sided wooden lean-to was located on the southern aspect. The lean-to had a sloping roof clad in wood.

Plate 1: Outbuilding Northern Aspect



Plate 2: Outbuilding Eastern Aspect



Plate 3: Outbuilding Southern Aspect



Plate 4: Outbuilding Raised Tiles

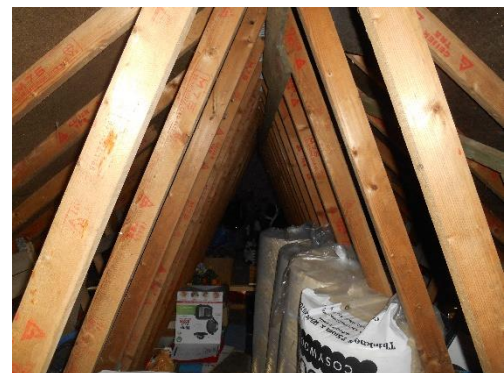


Internally, the Outbuilding was open plan. A partial ceiling created a loft space / mezzanine area, which was used for storage (Plates 5 & 6). A much of this space lacked a floor, it was light inside. The roof was lined with bitumen felt and supported by a sealed wooden frame. Cobwebs were present along the apex. The gable walls were constructed from block. No signs of bats were recorded and the Outbuilding appeared to be frequently disturbed.

Plate 5: Loft Space Partial Floor



Plate 6: Loft Space



Based solely on the raised tiles, the Outbuilding was assessed as having Low BRP.

3.3.2 Bat Activity Survey

The survey was undertaken at an appropriate time and during suitable environmental conditions (Table 2).

Table 2: Survey Timings and Environmental Conditions

Date	Sunset	Survey Times		Air Temperature (°C)		Wind Speed		Cloud cover (%)	
		Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End
30/08/23	20:02	19:47	21:32	22	17	1	1	20	20

Survey 1

No bats emerged from, or showed interest in, the Outbuilding.

Species recorded during the survey were soprano pipistrelle (which flew through the Site from the south) and long-eared bat (which were observed foraging around an apple tree in the north).

3.3.3 Birds

No signs of birds were recorded in the Outbuilding.

4 ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Roosting Bats

No evidence of bats was recorded in the Outbuilding; however, the building did include suitable roost features that could not be fully inspected i.e. raised tiles. No bats were observed emerging from, or showing interest in, these tiles (or indeed the Outbuilding as a whole). Based on the combined data, the Outbuilding did not contain a bat roost. No further survey or mitigation is recommended. This conclusion is valid for two years; if no works have been started within this time, a resurvey should be undertaken.

Many bat species are photophobic and actively avoid illuminated areas. To prevent impacts on foraging and commuting bats, a sensitive lighting strategy is recommended. The sensitive lighting strategy will comprise the following broad elements (BCT, 2018):

- No excessive lighting - use only the minimum amount required for safety;
- Minimise light spill – use short columns and direct light downwards and in towards the Site;
- Use narrow spectrum bulbs that emit minimal ultra-violet light - avoid white and blue wavelengths of the spectrum, which can attract invertebrates;
- Lights should either peak higher than 550 nm or use glass lantern covers to filter UV light;
- Avoid using reflective surfaces under lights; and
- Minimise the amount of light spill by good design.

4.2 Birds

No signs of birds were recorded and no further survey or mitigation is recommended.

4.3 Opportunities for Enhancement

The Outbuilding could be fitted with a bat box. It is recommended that woodcrete boxes are used as these are long-lasting and often come with a 25-year guarantee. The box should be oriented between southeast and southwest in a dark location i.e. not subject to artificial lighting. Ideally, it should be placed in an uncluttered location so that bats can easily fly in and out (www.bats.org.uk).

5 REFERENCES

BCT (2018) Bats and Lighting. Bat Conservation Trust, London

BCT (2016) Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines 3rd Edition. BCT, London

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