



## **Preliminary Bat & Bird Assessment**

Site:

Barn to the SE of Retorrick Mill, St Mawgan, TR8 4BH

Grid Reference: SW 86998 66750

30<sup>th</sup> September 2022

Version 1



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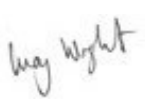

### Document Control:

<b>Site Name:</b>	Barn to the SE of Retorrick Mill, St Mawgan, TR8 4BH
<b>OS Grid Reference:</b>	SW 86998 66750
<b>Report Author:</b>	Chloe Balmer MSc (Hons) CIEEM member; Bat licence no: 2020-47040-CLS-CLS
<b>Document Approved by:</b>	Dr Lucy Wright BSc (Hon) MSc PhD MCIEEM; bat licence no. 2022-10359-CL17-BAT)
<b>Client:</b>	Chris Williams
<b>Report Reference Number:</b>	P4E2795
<b>Version:</b>	01
<b>Date:</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> September 2022

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### Declaration:

"The information, evidence and advice, which we have prepared and provided is true, and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management's (CIEEM) Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions."

<b>Lucy Wright</b>	
<b>Chloe Balmer</b>	

### Report Lifespan:

Ecological features can change over time, particularly if site management/ use changes. Typically, preliminary bat and bird assessments are valid for one year (until September 2023).



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## Summary

<b>Bat evidence?</b>	<p>The barn to the south-east of Retorrick Mill was surveyed for evidence of roosting bats on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2022. All parts of the barn were accessible and could be fully inspected. No evidence of roosting bats was observed within the interior of the barn, and very few external features with potential to support roosting bats were observed. The barn was assessed as being of '<b>negligible suitability</b>' for roosting bats.</p>
<b>Bat mitigation recommendations?</b>	<p>Precautionary recommendations are provided.</p> <p>There is opportunity to make provision for roosting bats within the fabric of/ on the exterior of the converted/ replacement building and enhance the value of the site for bats post-development.</p> <p>No further surveys for bats are recommended.</p>
<b>Bird evidence?</b>	<p>Evidence of an old bird's nests (likely barn swallow (<i>Hirundo rustica</i>)) was observed at the apex on the metal joists. Due to the absence of evidence of barn owl, the barn was assessed as being of '<b>negligible suitability</b>' for barn owl.</p>
<b>Bird mitigation recommendations?</b>	<p>Works to the barn should be undertaken between October and February, when birds will not be nesting, or, alternatively, preceded with a thorough search for nesting birds (to be undertaken by an ecologist) immediately prior to works commencing. NB: bat mitigation may necessitate works outside of winter; to be confirmed following completion of the further bat surveys.</p> <p>There is opportunity to make provision for nesting birds post-development by incorporating a single bird box within the fabric of the building/ exterior of the building and enhance the value of the site for birds post-development.</p> <p>No further surveys for birds are recommended.</p>



## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Chris Williams commissioned Plan for Ecology Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Bat and Bird Assessment (sometimes referred to as a Bat and Barn Owl Assessment) of a barn to the south-east of Retorrick Mill, St Mawgan, Cornwall, TR8 4BH (OS Grid Ref: SW 86998 66750) in August 2022. The client proposes to convert the eastern part of the barn into two residential dwellings.

### 1.2 Project Administration

<b>Property Address:</b>	Barn to the SE of Retorrick Mill, St Mawgan, TR8 4BH
<b>OS Grid Reference:</b>	SW 86998 66750
<b>Client:</b>	Chris Williams
<b>Planning Authority:</b>	Cornwall council
<b>Planning Reference Number:</b>	Unknown
<b>Report Reference Number:</b>	P4E2795
<b>Proposed work:</b>	Barn conversion for two residential dwellings
<b>Survey Date:</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> September 2022
<b>Ecologist &amp; Licence Number:</b>	Chloe Balmer MSci (Hons) CIEEM Member (Bat licence no: 2020-47040-CLS-CLS)

### 1.3 Legislation & Planning Policy

**Planning:** The local planning authority has a statutory obligation to consider impacts upon protected species resulting from development. Planning permission will not be granted with outstanding ecological surveys, and if applicable an appropriate mitigation plan.

**Bats:** In the UK all bat species are listed on Annex IV(a) of the European Communities Habitats Directive and as such are European Protected Species (EPS). In Britain protection of bats is achieved through their inclusion on Schedule 2 of the Conservation and Habitats Regulations 2019 (as amended), Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 12 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (HM Government, 1981, 2000 & 2010).

As a result of this statutory legislation it is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat/s in its roost;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a bat roost (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time);
- Possess or sell or exchange a bat (dead or alive) or part of a bat.

Works with potential to cause significant disturbance to roosting bats may require a European Protected Species (EPSL) licence or Bat Mitigation Class Licence (CL21) from Natural England before works can legally commence. Works likely to result in less significant disturbance may be



carried out under a Bat Mitigation Method Statement. The magnitude of disturbance and therefore the requirement for an EPSL, Bat Mitigation Class Licence or method statement is assessed on a case by case basis by the bat ecologist. The Bat Mitigation Method Statement or EPSL must be prepared and/or applied for by a suitably experienced and licenced bat ecologist. Where planning permission is required, the appropriate licence cannot be obtained until planning permission has been granted.

**Birds:** In Britain the nests (whilst in use or being built) and eggs of wild birds are protected against taking, damage and destruction under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (HM Government, 1981). The barn owl (*Tyto alba*) is listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (HM Government, 1981); this legislation makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally capture, injure or kill a barn owl;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a barn owl whilst nesting;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a dependent young barn owl.



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## 2.0 Methodology

The ecologist (Chloe Balmer) assessed the suitability of the barn and the surrounding habitat to support bats and birds. A high-power torch was used to illuminate all accessible areas of the building with potential to support roosting bats and roosting/ nesting birds. The ecologist searched for signs of bats and birds including droppings, staining, feeding remains, bird nests, barn owl pellets and liming.

The assessment was carried out in accordance with the 'Bat Survey for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines' produced by the Bat Conservation Trust (Collins, 2016).

### 2.1 Ecological Evaluation

Potential bat roosts identified during the visual inspection of the building were categorised as to their suitability in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2016) as described below:

Negligible: negligible features with potential to support roosting bats.

Low: one or more features with potential to support individual bats on an occasional basis. Unlikely to support large numbers of bats.

Moderate: one or more features with potential to support roosting bats but unlikely to be of high conservation status.

High: one or more features with potential to support large numbers of bats on a regular basis.

### 2.2 Limitations

All parts of the building were accessible and could be visually inspected for evidence of bats and birds. Weather during the survey was in line with seasonal norms (16°C, light air, light rain with sunny intervals and full cloud); there are no limitations associated with weather conditions.



## 3.0 Assessment Results

### 3.1 Site Description

The barn south-east of Retorrick Mill is located on the northern edge of St Mawgan, approximately 1.9 km east of Mawgan Porth, c. 5.4 km north-west of St Columb Major, and c. 9.9 km south of Padstow, Cornwall. The barn is located within a farmstead and is surrounded by fields to the south, east and west. The coast/ estuary (including UK BAP Priority Habitat/ Section 41 NERC Act, 2006 'Maritime Cliffs and Slopes') is located c. 2.1 km to the west of the site, with a continuous corridor of Deciduous Woodland (UK BAP Priority Habitat) directly to the north of the barn, c. 15m at its nearest point. Habitats in the wider area comprise predominantly mixed farmland with pockets of broadleaved woodland; small towns and villages; and coastal habitats. Buildings in the wider area comprise a mixture of period and modern properties with vegetated gardens, outbuildings and barns. In combination, these features provide potential high-quality foraging and roosting habitat for bats, and suitable nest sites, roosts and foraging habitat for birds.

### 3.2 Bat Assessment

The visual assessment was undertaken on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

The building on-site is a detached agricultural barn. The barn currently houses livestock within stables located in the northern section, and farm storage of hay bales and farm machinery was located in the southern part of the barn. The barn is of mixed material construction (part corrugated metal, part corrugated fibre cement sheeting and part timber panelling supported by a concrete base) (Figs 1-6). The barn roof is pitched and features similar corrugated fibre cement sheeting material with a metal flashing ridge covering. The roof sheeting appears to be tight with no obvious gaps, and the ends of the ridge appeared to be covered preventing bat access or suitable gaps for roosting bats (Fig 4).

Internally, the barn comprises a single space with no void present (Figs 4-6). The roof structure is a traditional metal A-frame with an unlined corrugated roof. 15 roof lights in the form of clear corrugated panels were observed within the roof creating a light interior. The floor was part concrete and part earth (Figs 4-5). The metal apex, wall tops and corrugated walls were densely cobwebbed (Fig 6). A door on the eastern elevation is permanently open for livestock access, which creates a draughty space. Structurally, the barn was well sealed with no obvious small gaps or crevices. No evidence of bats using the barn for roosting was observed; furthermore, the roof and walls were densely cobwebbed and the interior space was light and draughty throughout, indicating that it is unlikely to be used for roosting by bats. The nearby woodland (off-site) is likely to have more potential to support roosting bats.

No evidence of the use of the barn by roosting bats was found and very few external features were observed that have potential to support roosting bats. Overall, the barn to the south-east of Retorrick Mill was assessed as being of **negligible suitability** for roosting bats.





Figure 1: View of the south and west elevations of the barn.



Figure 2: View of the western elevation of the barn.



Figure 3: View of the eastern elevation of the barn.



Figure 4: Interior view (towards the west) within the barn.

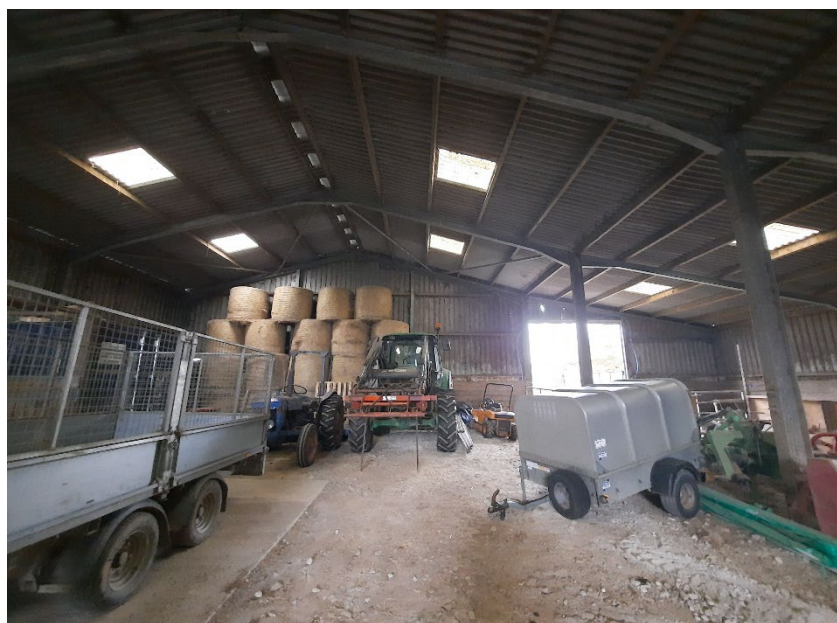


Figure 5: Interior view (towards the east) of the part earth, part concrete floor and the open doorway on the eastern elevation within the barn.

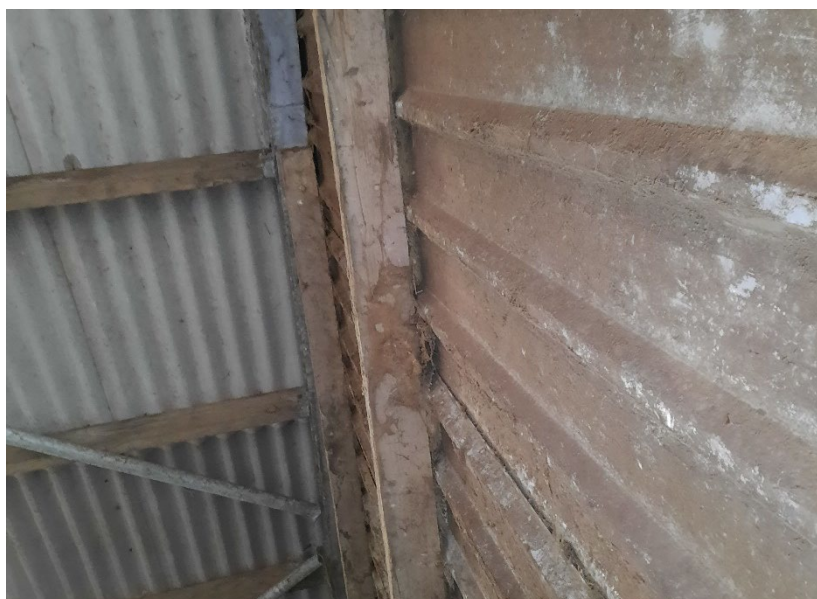


Figure 6: Interior view of the densely cobwebbed wall within the barn.



### 3.3 Bird Assessment

An old barn swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) nest was observed within the barn at the apex above the metal A-frame on the underside of the roof (Fig. 7).

No evidence of barn owls using the barn was noted but the barn provides suitable access for barn owl. In the absence of evidence, the barn was assessed as being of **negligible suitability** for nesting, breeding or resting barn owls.



Figure 7: View of an old barn swallow nest (yellow circle) within the apex of the barn.



## 4.0 Mitigation Recommendations

### 4.1 Bat Mitigation

Although no current evidence of roosting bats was found, absence cannot be assumed. A precautionary approach should be adopted. The building contractors should be made aware that bats can roost unseen within the building structure. In the unlikely event that a bat is uncovered during construction works, the bat must not be handled, and works must stop immediately (as soon as it is safe to do so). Advice must be sought from an experienced and licensed bat ecologist (Plan for Ecology Ltd: 01326 218839) or Bat Conservation Trust (Tel: 0345 1300 228). In this scenario, it may be necessary to undertake further survey work and subsequently obtain a bat licence from Natural England before works are permitted to resume. See Section 1.3 for relevant legislation.

Further surveys for bats are not recommended as part of this assessment.

### 4.2 Bird Mitigation

Evidence of an old barn swallow nest was observed within the apex of the barn; alternative provision for nesting swallows should be made within the converted/ replacement building or an alternative building within the site. Suitable products include No. 10 Schwegler Swallow Nest. The alternative barn swallow nest box must be situated within an alternative outbuilding, garage or partially covered area, such as a porch, with suitable permanent access via e.g. an open door or window. Suitable products are available at <https://www.nhbs.com>, and <https://www.wildcare.co.uk/>.

A precautionary approach should be adopted during works. Works to the barn should be avoided during the bird nesting season (March to September inclusive) or preceded with a thorough search for nests, to be undertaken by an ecologist. If, during works, an active bird nest is uncovered, works must stop immediately (as soon as it is safe to do so) and delayed until nesting activity has ceased. Works are most likely to be delayed between April and July.

### 4.3 Opportunities for Biodiversity Enhancement

Net gain is described as a measurable target(s) for development projects where impacts on biodiversity are outweighed by the mitigation hierarchy approach to first avoid, and then minimise, impact including through restoration and/ or compensation (Baker *et al.*, 2019).

The biodiversity value of the site for roosting bats and nesting birds, post-development could be enhanced by installing bird and bat boxes within the fabric of the converted/ replacement building, or on the building exterior. The value of the site for invertebrates could be enhanced by installing bee bricks within the building or bee posts within landscaped parts of the site. Plan for Ecology Ltd can provide detailed recommendations upon request. These recommendations are in accordance with the Cornwall Planning for Biodiversity Guide (Cornwall Council, 2018).

NB: suitable products are available from [www.nhbs.com](http://www.nhbs.com), [www.wildcareshop.com](http://www.wildcareshop.com) and [www.greenandblue.co.uk](http://www.greenandblue.co.uk)



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## 5.0 References

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