



Preliminary Bat & Bird Assessment

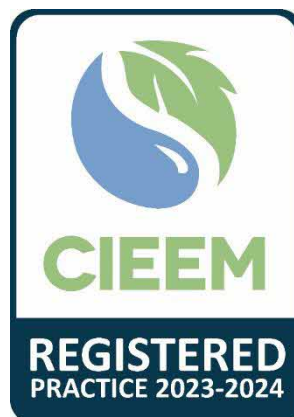
Site:

Derna House, Beach Road, Porthtowan, Cornwall, TR4 8AD

Grid Reference: SW 69332 47770

19th January 2024

Version 1



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Document Control:

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| OS Grid Reference: | SW 69332 47770 |
| Report Author: | Chloe Balmer MSci (Hons) ACIEEM; Bat licence no: 2020-47040-CLS-CLS; Barn Owl licence no. 2022-10943-CL29-OWL. |
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| Client: | Jonathon Smith |
| Report Reference Number: | P4E3289 |
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| Date: | 19 th January 2024 |

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."

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Katherine Biggs |  |
| Chloe Balmer |  |

Report Lifespan:

At the time of writing, Cornwall Council considers Ecological Impact Assessments (EciAs) and Preliminary Bat and Bird Assessments to be valid for 12 months (until January 2025), unless stated otherwise.



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Summary

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| Bat evidence? | <p>The garage on the northern extension of Derna House, Beach Road, Porthtowan, Cornwall, TR4 8AD was surveyed for evidence of roosting bats on 8th January 2024. All parts of the garage were accessible and could be fully inspected. No evidence of roosting bats was observed within the interior of the garage, and no external features with potential to support roosting bats were observed. In addition, the open, draughty nature of the building may have reduced the likelihood of bats roosting within the building.</p> <p>The garage at Derna House was assessed as being of 'negligible suitability' for roosting bats.</p> |
| Bat mitigation recommendations? | <p>Precautionary recommendations are provided.</p> <p>There is opportunity to enhance the value of the site for bats post-completion.</p> <p>No further surveys for bats are recommended.</p> |
| Bird evidence? | <p>No evidence of nesting birds was recorded. Due to the absence of a suitable access point, the building was assessed as being of 'negligible suitability' for barn owl (<i>Tyto alba</i>).</p> |
| Bird mitigation recommendations? | <p>A precautionary approach must be adopted. If an active bird nest is uncovered, works within at least 5m of the nest must stop immediately (as soon as it is safe to do so) and be delayed until nesting activity has ceased. Works are most likely to be delayed between April and July.</p> <p>There is opportunity to make provision for nesting birds' post-development by incorporating bird boxes on the exterior of the building or on a tree within the garden of the property. Provision of a bird box has potential to 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

Jonathon Smith 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 garage at Derna House, Beach Road, Porthtowan, Cornwall, TR4 8AD (OS Grid Ref: SW 69332 47770) in November 2023. The client proposes to demolish the single-storey northern extension (currently a garage) and construct a replacement two-storey extension for residential use.

1.2 Project Administration

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Property Address: | Derna House, Beach Road, Porthtowan, Cornwall, TR4 8AD |
| OS Grid Reference: | SW 69332 47770 |
| Client: | Jonathon Smith |
| Planning Authority: | Cornwall Council |
| Planning Reference Number: | Unknown |
| Report Reference Number: | P4E3289 |
| Proposed work: | Demolition of a single-storey garage and construction of a two-storey extension. |
| Survey Date: | 8 th January 2024 |
| Ecologist & Licence Number: | Chloe Balmer MSci (Hons) ACIEEM (Bat licence no: 2020-47040-CLS-CLS; Barn Owl licence no. 2022-10943-CL29-OWL). |

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 2017 (as amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (HM Government, 2019)), 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 & 2017).

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.



2.0 Methodology

The ecologist (Chloe Balmer) assessed the suitability of the garage 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, 2023).

2.1 Ecological Evaluation

Potential bat roosts identified during the visual inspection of the buildings were categorised as to their suitability in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023) as described below:

None: No habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats at any time of year.

Negligible: No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.

Low: A structure with one or more features with potential to support individual bats opportunistically at any time of year. 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.

Moderate: A structure 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.

High: A structure 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 their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts such as maternity or hibernation roosts.

2.2 Limitations

All parts of garage were accessible and could be visually inspected for evidence of bats and birds. The garage was single-storey and viewed from ground level, however, the rear garden is split level and was higher than the highest point of the roof of the garage, therefore a good viewpoint was achieved and it is unlikely that any Potential Roost Features (PRFs) were missed. Weather during the survey was in line with seasonal norms (5°C, light air, sunny and part cloud); there are no limitations associated with weather conditions.



3.0 Assessment Results

3.1 Site Description

Derna House is located within Porthtowan, approximately 4.2 km south of St Agnes, c. 5.7 km north of Redruth and c. 12.7 km west of Truro, Cornwall. The site is coastal-residential with a road adjacent to the building to the east and the coast c. 400m to the north west featuring Maritime Cliffs and Slopes (Section 41 NERC Act, 2006 Habitat of Principle Importance; UK BAP Priority Habitat). Pockets of Deciduous Woodland (Section 41 NERC Act, 2006 Habitat of Principle Importance; UK BAP Priority Habitat) are present c. 320m to the south of the site. Habitats in the wider area comprise predominantly mixed farmland with pockets of broadleaved woodland, coastal habitats, and small towns and villages. 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 of the garage at Derna House (Fig 1) was undertaken on 8th January 2023.



Figure 1: View of the location of the garage surveyed (yellow outline); located off of the northern elevation of Derna House.

The building surveyed is a single storey open fronted garage on the northwest corner of the dwelling 'Derna House'. The garage is of block construction with a concrete base and a mono-pitched sloping roof (south to north). No fascia/ wall top coverings were present (Figs 2-3). Plastic guttering and downpipes were present on the north and east elevations of the garage. No metal garage door was present at the time of survey, leaving the eastern elevation open (the main dwelling was undergoing works and so the garage is in constant use as access to the rear of the property). A single uPVC glazed door is present on the south elevation of the garage. The roof comprised slate tiles which were tight with none slipped or lifting. Overall, the exterior of the garage had very few features that could support roosting bats.



Internally, the space features a partition separating the space into two sections, the northern section was used for storage and access and the southern section, which is much smaller, was a sink room and also used for storage (Fig 4). The roof is supported by timber joists, measuring c. 2.5m to the underside of the roof material, which is lined with a synthetic roof membrane. The roof lining was damp in places (Fig 5). The space is well lit and draughty from the open nature of the garage and the floor is concrete. No gaps were observed at the wall tops or between the blockwork. No evidence of bats was found within the interior of the garage.

No evidence of roosting bats was found within the garage and very few external features were observed that have potential to support roosting bats. In addition, the open, draughty nature of the building may have reduced the likelihood of bats roosting within the building. Overall, the garage at Derna House in Porthtowan, was assessed as being of negligible suitability for roosting bats.



Figure 2: View of the eastern elevation of the garage at Derna House.



Figure 3: View of the roof and partial view of the western elevation of the garage at Derna House.

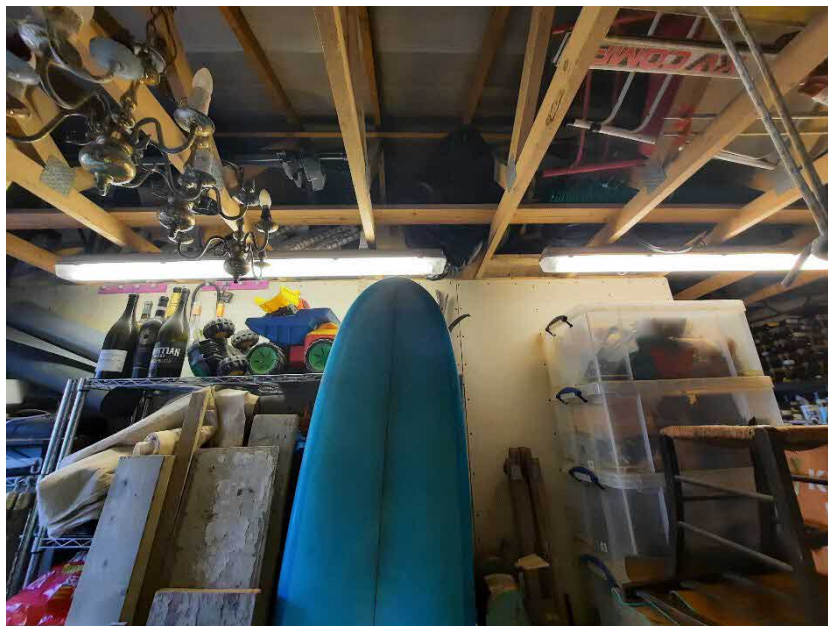


Figure 4: Interior view (towards the south) of the garage at Derna House, showing the timber roof joists and stored items.

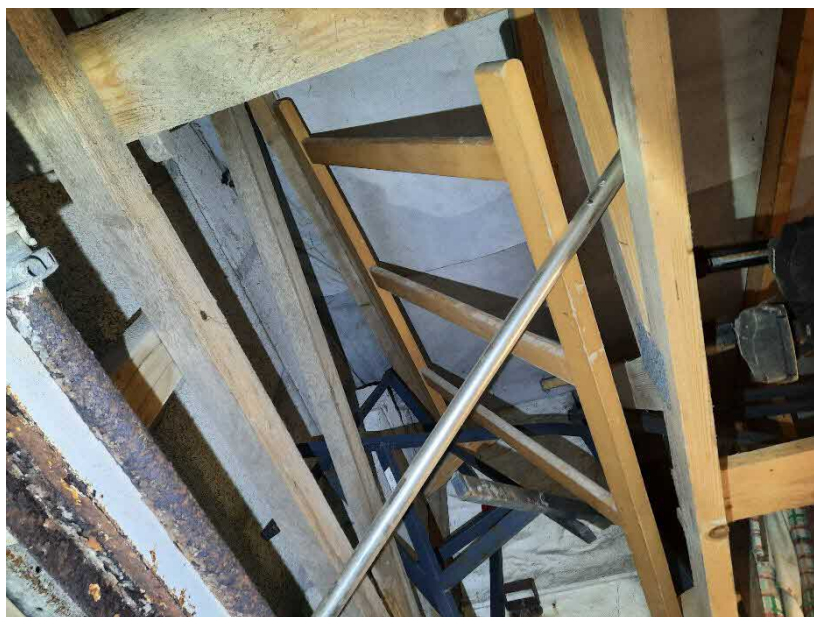


Figure 5: Interior view of the synthetic lining on the roof of the garage at Derna House.



3.3 Bird Assessment

No evidence of nesting birds was recorded. No evidence of barn owls using the building was noted and there are no suitable access points for barn owl. Due to the absence of suitable access points, the garage at Derna House was assessed as being of 'negligible suitability' for nesting, breeding or resting barn owls.



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 garage. In the unlikely event that a bat is uncovered during 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 the Bat Conservation Trust (Tel: 0345 1300 228). In this scenario, it may be necessary to 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

No evidence of nesting birds was recorded. A precautionary approach should be adopted during development works. If an active bird nest is uncovered, works must stop immediately (as soon as it is safe to do so) and be delayed until nesting activity has ceased. Works are most likely to be delayed between April and July.

No evidence of barn owl was found within the garage at Derna House and the building was assessed as being of negligible suitability for barn owl.

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

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). Biodiversity net gain is an approach to development, and/or land management, that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand.

The biodiversity value of the site for roosting bats and nesting birds' post-development could be enhanced by installing bat and bird boxes within the fabric of the new extension or on the building exterior (on north and east elevations for bird boxes and south and west elevations for bat boxes). The value of the site for invertebrates could be enhanced by installing bee bricks within the fabric of the extension and/ or bee posts within grounds 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, www.wildcareshop.com and www.greenandblue.co.uk



5.0 References

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