



BAT, BARN OWL AND NESTING BIRD SURVEY

on

3 WINDMILL LANE, LAUNCESTON, CORNWALL

January 2024



Wheal Grey Ecology Ltd

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**BAT, BARN OWL AND NESTING BIRD SURVEY ON
3 WINDMILL LANE, LAUNCESTON, CORNWALL**

O.S. Grid Ref: SX 3338 8428

Survey date: 19th January 2024

Surveyor: Simon Barnard BSc (Hons) MSc CEcol MCIEEM
Class Survey Licence Reg. Nos. 2017-32208-CLS-CLS
(Level 3) & 2015-13541-CLS-CLS (Level 4)
Barn Owl Class Survey Licence CL29/00170

Time spent on site: ¾ hour

Taxonomic groups covered: Bats, Barn Owls and Nesting Birds

Report author: Simon Barnard BSc (Hons) MSc CEcol MCIEEM

Filename & issue number: BBONB_3 Windmill Lane, Launceston_Final 1

Report for: Ms Julie Earp

Report No: 23-071/PC/3 Windmill Lane, Launceston_BBONB
Street

Report completed: 30th January 2024

Report Sign off**Document checked and
approved for issue by:**

Debra Barnard MBBCh Director

Signature:**Date:**31st January 2024

Bat surveys are considered to be valid for 12 months from the date of the survey by the local planning authority.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Wheal Grey Ecology Ltd were instructed by Ms Julie Earp to carry out a visual inspection on 3 Windmill Lane, Launceston, Cornwall looking for evidence of use of the building by Bats, Barn Owls and Nesting Birds. The proposal is to apply for retrospective planning permission to extend the property.

The survey was carried out in the morning of the 19th January 2024 and the weather conditions were sunny and dry with a light breeze, 30% cloud cover and the temperature was 7°C.

2. DESCRIPTION OF BUILDINGS AND SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE

2.1. Description of Building

The building subject to this survey is a two storey semi-detached stone built cottage with a pitched roof covered with natural slate which extends down to 1st floor level to the rear. Recent building work to the house has been carried out with a new large dormer having been constructed into the rear slope of the roof and the roof having been recovered with the ceilings on the 1st floor in the front section of the house having been taken down. The new dormer on the rear of the building has been constructed to raise the ceiling height in the rear 1st floor bedroom and in the stairwell. This dormer is built from timber studworks and has been clad on the exterior with hanging slate. The dormer has plastic sheeting closing the window apertures. The building has a rendered gable end to the north with a chimney built into the wall and is attached to the neighbouring property to the south, see Photos 1 and 2.



Photo 1. Showing the front and northern gable end of the house



Photo 2. Showing the rear of the house and new dormer from the east

Internally within the new dormer the walls and underside of the roof have been lined with plasterboard but not finished with the rooms on the 1st floor over the front part of the house having large holes in the ceiling but the rafters are still covered with fiberglass insulation, see Photos 3 and 4. The roof void of this house extends over the roof void of the attached cottage with no fire partition. The building has not been lived in for number of years with the interior of the building being all open and having been stripped back.



Photo 3. Showing the interior of the new rear dormer



Photo 4. Showing the roof void

Externally the gable end is well sealed but there are a number of gaps at the eaves which could be used by bats to access the interior however there are few enclosed voids or cavities which could be used by them for roosting. On the rear of the building there is a broken window on the ground floor which potentially creates a fly-in access point to the interior. However all areas of the interior of the building were carefully searched and no evidence of the use of any part of the interior of the building by roosting bats was found.

2.2. Surrounding landscape

The building is located within the town of Launceston, to the south of the town centre, and is surrounded by houses with small gardens and street lit roads with the ground dropping away steeply to the east. A short distance away to the south is Coronation Park, a large open green space lined with trees with Windmill Hill School to the west, which is also lined with trees, see Figure 1.



Figure 1. Google Earth image showing the location of the property (shown by the red arrow) and surrounding landscape

The property is surrounded by houses with small poorly vegetated gardens but there are open areas and lines of trees nearby and represents moderate quality urban bat foraging habitat. The gardens are likely to be used by the bat species more commonly found in urban environments including Common Pipistrelles.

3. METHODS

3.1. Bats

The building was inspected externally and internally looking for evidence of the use of the building by roosting bats using a high-power torch, ladders, binoculars and an endoscope (where needed). This included looking for individual or groups of roosting bats and signs that the building is currently, recently or has been historically used for roosting by bats such as droppings or staining around potential access points. It involves searching between any roof timbers, walls and wall tops, any cavities, openings or gaps behind hanging slates or fascia's, window ledges and other protruding features. Additionally, any potential entry points are inspected thoroughly for signs of their use, i.e., staining, polishing or scratching of woodwork (indicating use by bats).

As bats can leave little evidence of their occupation, this survey included an assessment of the potential of the building and features of the building to support roosting bats. This involved identifying potential roosting features including but not limited to cracks, crevices and voids, cavities created by spaced off fascia, hanging slates or split render and any other features capable of providing suitable roosting space for bats.

3.2. Barn Owls

Where suitable access points into the building were present the interior was carefully searched, with the aid of a torch, looking for evidence that the building is used by Barn Owls, for either nesting or roosting. This includes searching for owl pellets, feathers and nest debris, with particular attention being paid to the ground below crossing timbers, below any artificial nest boxes which may have been installed or ledges which could be used by nesting Barn Owls. If any nest boxes or ledges are present and it is safe to do so they will also be inspected for signs of use.

3.3. Swallows and other birds

Suitable ledges, voids and the underside of any floors or timberwork which could provide nesting space for Swallows and other birds were inspected for evidence of previous or current nest building attempts.

3.4. Surveyors' experience and licences held

Simon Barnard is an experienced bat surveyor with over 16 years' experience of carrying out all aspects of professional bat survey work including activity surveys, call analysis and emergence surveys. He has held a Natural England survey licence for more than 12 years, currently being registered on the Level 3 (CL19) and level 4 (CL20) Class Survey Licence. He has been involved in designing numerous mitigation schemes and obtaining European Protected Species development licences for the majority of the species of bats found in Devon and Cornwall and is a registered consultant on Annex's B, C and D on the Natural England's Bat Mitigation Class Licence. He also holds a valid Barn Owl Class Survey Licence CL29/00170.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Bats

No evidence of the use of this building by roosting bats was found during this survey. All areas of the interior of the building were carefully searched and no evidence of the use by roosting bats was found. As the building had been stripped back there were no significant enclosed spaces usable by roosting bats identified.

4.2. Barn Owls

No evidence of the use of this building by Barn Owls was found.

4.3. Swallows and other bird species

No evidence of the use of this building by nesting birds was found.

4.4. Limitations

There were no significant limitations on this survey with all areas being fully accessible and carefully inspected.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Bats

As no evidence of the use of this building by roosting bats was found, and it has no significant potential to be used by them, the proposed works can proceed with a low to negligible risk of disturbing/harming roosting bats or damaging or destroying a bat roost.

It should be noted that in any building individual bats could occasionally roost. If a bat was to be found unexpectedly whilst the works are being carried out, work should stop immediately and Wheal Grey Ecology Ltd contacted and further advice sort. If a bat were to be found it should be protected from the elements and predators and work activity in the immediate vicinity should stop until further advice is received.

5.2. Barn Owls

No recommendations necessary.

5.3. Swallows and other bird species

No recommendations necessary.

6. MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENTS

6.1. Bats

No evidence of the use of this building by roosting bats was found and therefore no mitigation is required.

However, new roosting opportunities for bats could be incorporated into the building should the owners wish to do so. This could be done fairly simply by installing bolt-on purpose-built bat boxes onto the exterior of the building. This would help to potentially enhance the biodiversity value of the site.

Please contact us at Wheal Grey Ecology for further information if this is something you would like to consider.

6.2. Barn Owls

No mitigation is needed.

6.3. Swallows and other bird species

New nesting opportunities for birds could be incorporated onto the building by mounting prefabricated nest boxes onto the exteriors of the building or building them into the new extension. This would help to maintain and enhance the biodiversity value of the site.

7. LEGISLATION

7.1. Bats

Bats in England have been protected under a number of regulations and amendments but the most up-to-date and relevant are:

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Section 9)

The result of Regulations and Acts is that all species of bat and their breeding sites or resting places (roosts) are protected under law. It is an offence to:

Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat
Deliberately disturb a bat in a way that would affect its ability to survive, breed or rear young or significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species
Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat at a roost
Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a roost whether bats are present or not
Damage or destroy a roost whether bats are present or not
Possess, control, transport, sell, exchange or offer for sale/exchange any live or dead bat or any part of a bat

Through the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (this has been updated and consolidated with subsequent amendments by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 mentioned above) bats were designated a European protected species as part of a Europe wide effort to conserve certain plant and animal species.

Any development which is likely to result in the disturbance of a European protected species, or damage to its habitat usually requires a European protected species licence from Natural England. 'Development' is interpreted broadly to include projects involving demolition of buildings, rebuilding, structural alterations and additions to buildings.

7.2. Birds

All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law and it is an offence, with certain exceptions, to intentionally:

Kill, injure or take any wild bird.
Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built.
Take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2017 require public bodies to help “*preserve, maintain and re-establish habitat for wild birds.*”

Barn Owls and other birds listed in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 are given a further level of protection against disturbance whilst breeding.

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