

BAT AND BIRD PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT

**Walmer
Trenisson
Portloe
TR2 5PL**



Client	Becky Orchard
Project reference	498/24
Surveyor and licence numbers	Samantha Smith BSc MRSB Registered Consultant RC101 2018-35700-CLS-CLS Level 3 2019-42249-CLS-CLS-1 Level 4 Barn owl: CL29/00030
Date of survey	18 January 2024
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Issue date	25 January 2024

SUMMARY

- A bat and bird preliminary roost assessment of Walmer, Trenisson near Portloe was commissioned in January 2024. This assessment is an internal and external inspection building in which the likelihood of use by protected species will be assessed.
- It is proposed to extend the property with the addition of a first floor.
- This visual assessment was undertaken on the 18 January 2024 by a licensed bat ecologist. It was a sunny but chilly day with a light breeze.
- During the assessment no evidence of roosting bats was found, the property is considered to have negligible suitability to support roosting bats.
- No further bat surveys are required for the proposed extension.
- No evidence of barn owls or other nesting birds were noted during this assessment.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

A bat and bird Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of Walmer at Trenisson near Portloe was commissioned in January 2024. This is in relation to a planning application for a proposed extension to the property. The assessment is an internal and external inspection in which the likelihood of use by protected species will be assessed; it will also inform any requirements for further surveys and/or for mitigation.

1.2 Site description

The property is located at Trenisson on the Roseland Peninsula in mid Cornwall at OS Grid Reference SW 93980 40184.

Walmer is a detached property located on the entrance to Trenisson which consists of a residential dwelling, converted barns and outbuildings. The property is located within its own grounds of hardstanding and amenity grassland with views overlooking Veryan Bay.

The surrounding land use consists of mixed agriculture with a good network of treelines. The village of Portloe is 0.6km to the south while the coast is 0.5km to the southeast.

The area provides excellent habitat for foraging and commuting bats and barn owls. There are historic records of brown long-eared bats (*Plecotus auritus*) and barn owls at Trenisson.



Figure 1 Location map



Figure 2 Aerial photo showing the location of Walmer.

1.3 Proposed works

It is proposed to extend the building by adding a first floor, this will require removal of the existing roof.

2. LEGISLATION

2.1 Bats

All species of bat are classed as European Protected Species (EPS) and are legally protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species 2017 (as amended). This legislation implements the European Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora 1992 (referred to as the 'Habitats Directive').

Bats and their roosts are also legally protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Several bat species are also UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority species and receive additional legal protection under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

In combination, this makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately, capture, injure or kill a bat.
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost, or deliberately disturb a group of bats
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a bat roost (a bat roost is interpreted as any structure or place which is used for shelter or protection, regardless of whether bats are present at the time)
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
- Possess, control, transport or sell or exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat

Bat ecologists are required to assess the significance of the bat roost and the scale of impact. Works involving significant disturbance or roost destruction (including changes to the roost) will require an EPS licence before the work can lawfully commence. Natural England is the licensing authority in England.

For further information and advice contact Natural England on 0845 601 4523 (local rate).

2.2 Nesting birds

The nests and eggs of all wild birds are protected against taking, damage and destruction under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Barn owls are given greater protection against disturbance while breeding under Schedule 1 of the Act.

2.3 Planning authority

If further bat surveys are recommended, these will need to be completed before the Local Planning Authority will be able to make a decision on the planning application. Appropriate mitigation will be required within the proposals.

3. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

3.1 Visual assessment

The assessment of the building and surrounding habitat for bats, barn owls and other nesting birds was undertaken on the 18 January 2024 by Samantha Smith MRSB Natural England Registered Consultant 101 with survey licences 2018-35700-CLS-CLS Level 3, 2019-42249-CLS-CLS-1 Level 4 (Bats) and CL29/00030 (Barn owl). It was a chilly but sunny day with a temperature of 2C and a light north easterly breeze (BF2).

An external search was systematically made paying attention to potential roosting areas and access points such as lintels, hanging tiles, weather boarding, lead flashing, eaves and any cracks and crevices. The interior was then examined in a similar manner looking at the roof structure, walls, floor spaces and any stored items.

Equipment available for the assessment includes:

- high powered lamps (1,000 lumen)
- binoculars
- telescopic ladders
- RIDGID CA-350 endoscope
- FLIR ONE thermal imaging camera

A preliminary assessment involves searching for live/dead bats, barn owls and other birds *in situ*, and evidence of use, such as droppings, pellets, staining, liming, feathers and feeding remains. The potential of the building to support protected species is also considered and any features thought suitable for use by bats or barn owls noted.

For the purpose of this assessment bat roosting potential for the building will be categorised using the system in Table 1.

Table 1. Bat roosting potential categories

Confirmed roost	Bats recorded roosting within the structure
High potential	Significant roosting potential due to the presence of many suitable and optimal features for roosting bats
Medium potential	A number of features suitable for roosting bats and/or good connectivity to suitable foraging habitat
Low potential	A structure with one or more potential roost sites which could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of year
Negligible potential	No obvious features on site likely to be used by roosting bats
None	No features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of year

3.2 Limitations

A single day time visit can only record evidence found and provide information on the potential for a building to support bats or other protected species. As bats are highly mobile and will move roosts on a daily, seasonal or yearly basis it is recommended that this report is valid for a year from the date of the assessment.

4. SURVEY RESULTS

Walmer is a 'u shaped' bungalow with a complex gable and valley roof structure. The house is unoccupied and has been stripped of all internal fittings.

The bungalow is constructed from block work and has external stone cladding and render. The roof is covered with concrete tiles and underlined with bitumen felt. The interior of the roof void is trussed with fibreglass insulation on the floor (Figure 3) There was free access into all aspects of the void and other than an old water tank the void is empty of stored items. There was no evidence of use by bats within the void and no access points were noted internally.

Externally the bungalow is well sealed with the plastic UPVC soffits and fascia boards flush against the wall, in addition there is a plastic covering on ends of the concrete tile roof (Figure 4).



Figure 3 Interior of roof void



Figure Soffits and gables well sealed

Attached to the bungalow via a small flat roofed entrance area is the garage. This is single storey stone built garage with a pitched roof. Externally there is some damage to a concrete tile on the roof however this is believed to have happened in a recent storm (Figure 5). Other than this the garage is well sealed externally with soffit boards flush against the wall and the edge of the tile roof covered with a plastic guard. Internally the garage is used for storage and does have an access hatch into the roof void. This void is also trussed and lined with a bitumen felt, there is no insulation present (Figure 6). No evidence of bats or use by bats was noted within the garage.



Figure 5 Damaged tile on garage

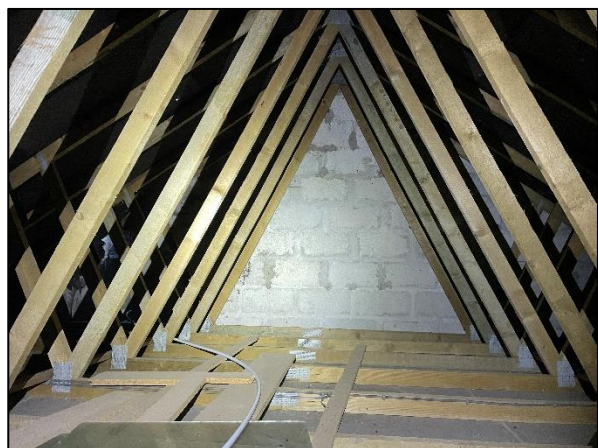


Figure 6 Roof void over garage

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Bats

No evidence of use by bats was noted within Walmer and no suitable access points for bats were noted. The property is considered to have negligible potential to support bats and no further bat surveys are required for the proposed extension.

However, care should still be taken during works as bats could roost unseen deep within crevices in the structure. If any bats are discovered during the work they must not be handled: works must stop immediately and advice sought from the bat ecologist (07919 923 468) or The Bat Conservation Trust (0345 1300 228).

5.2 Birds

No barn owls (*Tyto alba*) or evidence of barn owls was found at the time of the assessment, mitigation for this species is therefore not required for these proposals.

No sign of other nesting birds was recorded. If the works are to be carried out within the bird breeding season (March to September) the building should be searched as fully as possible. If nesting birds are present, works should not commence and further advice sought as the nests and eggs of all wild birds are protected against taking, damage or destruction under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

5.3 Enhancement

If you wish to promote wildlife it is possible to provide roosting opportunities for bats and birds in the new roof. Access for bats can be provided into the roof space by leaving small gaps 15-20mm wide by at least 50mm long in suitable places such as behind barge boards or at ridge tiles. If access is provided it is essential that if the roofing material is underlined only bitumen roofing felt is used. Recent research has shown that the modern roofing membranes can be harmful to bats (bats have been found dead in some roosts after having become entangled in the fibres of the membrane). Only type 1F bitumen felt is suitable for use in bat roosts. In addition, it is recommended that the ridge line is wet laid and a dry ridge system is not used.

Alternatively roost provision can be in the form of purpose made boxes integrated into the structure of the building. Bat and bird boxes are commercially available and can be purchased from a number of retailers online. Some examples of integrated bat boxes can be found at: <https://www.wildcare.co.uk/wildlife-nest-boxes/bat-boxes/wall-integrated.html> or <https://www.nhbs.com/4?slug=integrated-bat-boxes>

6. REFERENCES

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