BAT, BARN OWL AND NESTING BIRD SURVEY

on

SEA DRIFT, MAENPORTH, FALMOUTH, CORNWALL

February 2024

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BAT, BARN OWL AND NESTING BIRD SURVEY ON SEA DRIFT, MAENPORTH, FALMOUTH, CORNWALL

O.S. Grid Ref:	SW 79030 29239
Survey date:	28th February 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_Sea Drift, Maenporth_Final 1
Report for:	Mr Richard Kendall
Report No:	23-088/CvK/Sea Drift, Maenporth_BBONB
Report completed:	3rd March 2024

Report Sign off

Document checked and approved for issue by:	Debra Barnard MBBCh Director
Signature:	[redacted]
Date:	5th March 2024

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Wheal Grey Ecology Ltd were instructed by Mr Ben Wilson, of StudioCvK, on behalf of the client Mr Richard Kendall, to carry out a visual inspection on a property known as Sea Drift, Maenporth, Falmouth, Cornwall looking for evidence of use of the building by Bats, Barn Owls and Nesting Birds. The proposal is to modify the living accommodation in the roof space, re-cover the roof with natural slate, replacing and increasing the size of the dormers on the front and rear of the building, re-roofing the garage, building a new rear flat roof extension and some internal alterations.

The survey was undertaken in the morning on 28th February 2024 and the weather during the survey was overcast with light rain showers, a light breeze and 100% cloud cover; the temperature was 9°C.

2. DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE

2.1. Description of Building

The building subject to this survey is a rectangular dormer bungalow, built from rendered blockwork, with a hip ended roof covered with composite slate which has dormer windows to the front and rear. The building has bay windows to the front with a small single storey flat roofed extension to the side and another to the rear. To the front of the house, dug into the slope of the hill and so sitting below ground level, is a single storey garage with a flat roof formed using plywood lined with bitumen felt, see Photos 1, 2 and 3.

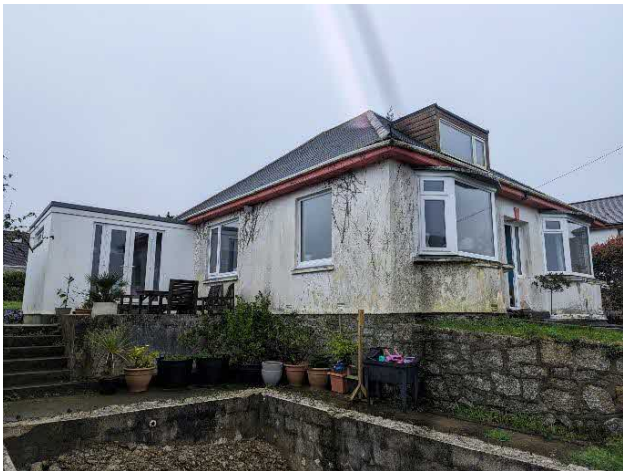

Photo 1. Showing the property from the north east

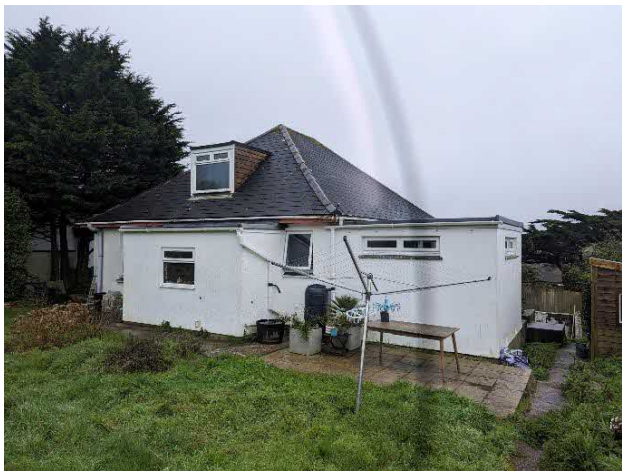

Photo 2. Showing the property from the south east

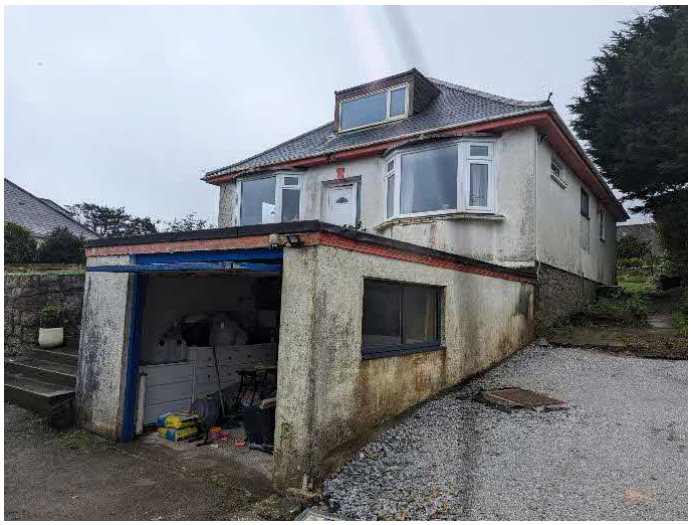

Photo 3. Showing the property from the north west including the garage

Internally the roof void is a single open space, which is arranged as a single room, running the length and width of the building, and has a mostly boarded floor and fixed staircase up from the ground floor. This room appears to have originally had lined walls and a ceiling but these have been removed and so the roof space is now a single completely open space, open from the floor to the underside of the roof which is lined with timber sarking, see Photos 4 and 5.

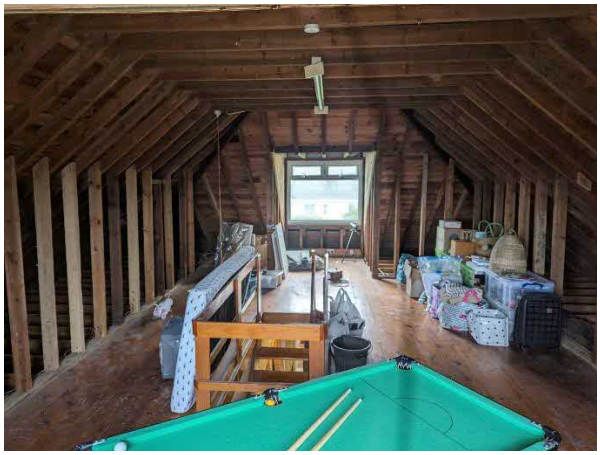

Photo 4. Showing the room in the roof space looking south

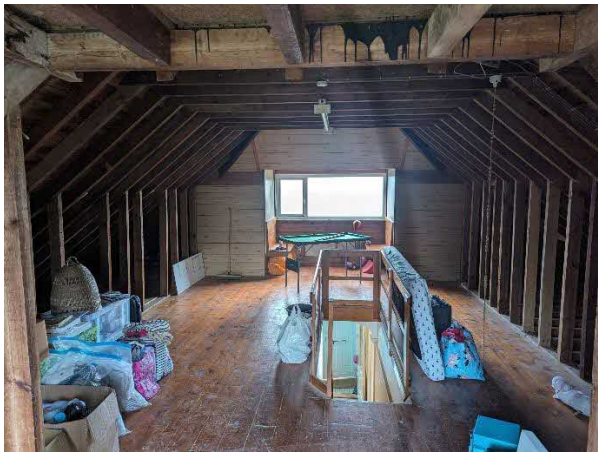

Photo 5. Showing the room in the roof space looking north

The garage has bare blockwork walls internally and is open from the concrete floor to the underside of the roof, which is formed from timber joists supporting a plywood roof, and is underground to the east and south, see Photo 6.

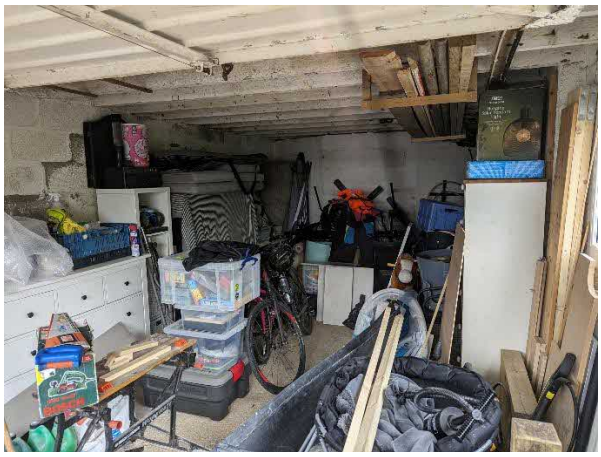

Photo 6. Showing the interior of the garage

Externally the fascia and soffit boards at the eaves, ridge tiles and roof coverings on both the house and garage are well sealed. There are a number of small gaps under the leadwork on the dormers by these where inspected from the ground and are limited in size.

2.2. Surrounding landscape

The property is located within the hamlet of Maenporth, on the South Cornish Coast looking out to the north over Maenporth Beach and Cove to the south of the town of Falmouth and east of the village of Mawnan Smith. To the south are large dwellings and a number hotels all set in large tree lined gardens. To the north of the house is an area of grass with a large area of woodland to the north west leading up the valleys and there is a large natural water body, see Figure 1.

The habitats surrounding the property represents good bat foraging habitat which is well linked into the surrounding landscape. The surrounding area is known to be well used by a number of species of bat including Common, Soprano and Nathusius Pipistrelles, Brown Long-eared bats, Whiskered bats, Natterer's, Noctules, Barbastelle and Lesser and Greater Horseshoes with roosts belonging to these species known to occur nearby.

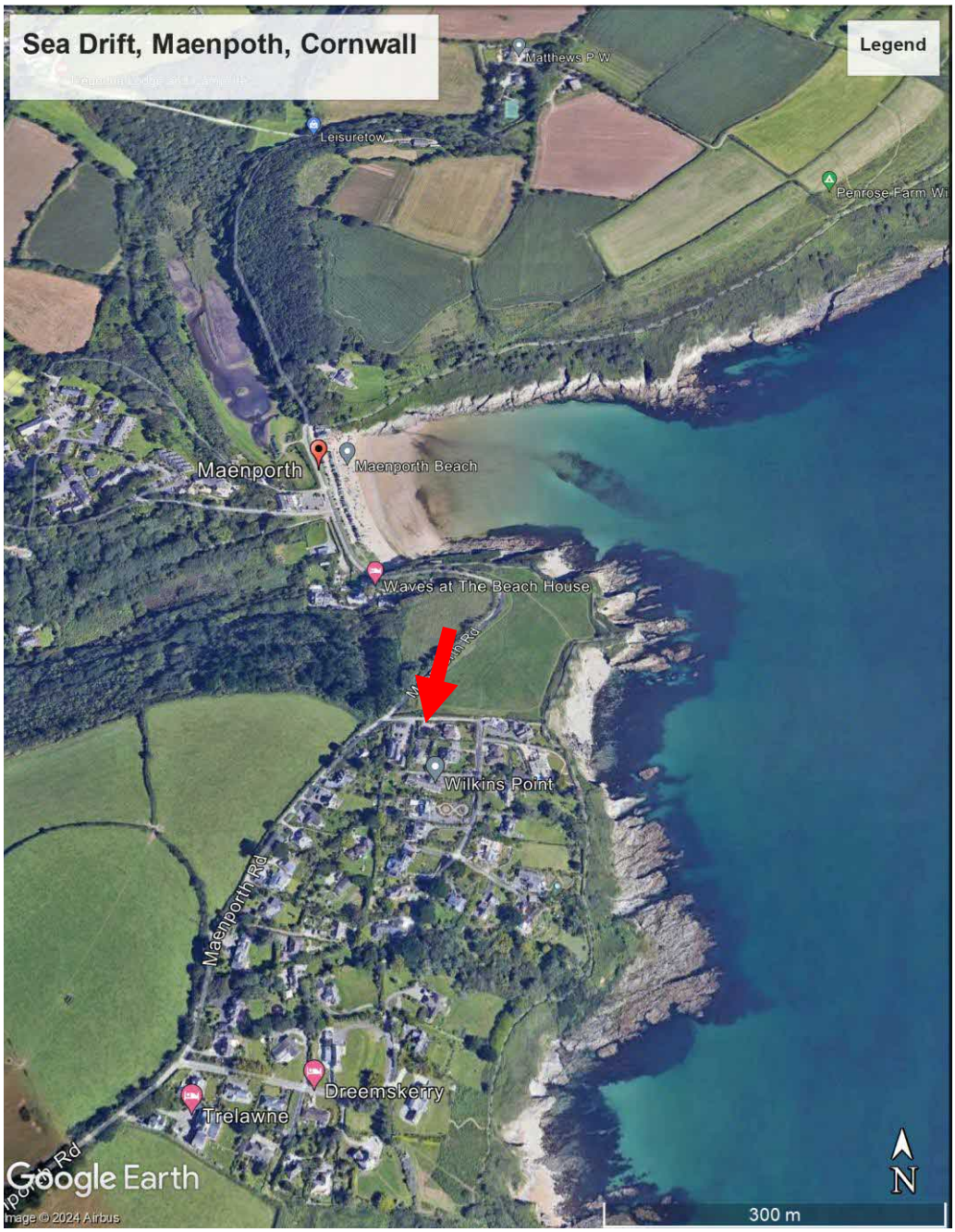

Figure 1. Google Earth image showing the location of the property (red arrow) and surrounding landscape

3. METHODS

3.1. Bats

The building was carefully inspected internally and externally, where access allowed, 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 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 the building by roosting bats was found and it appears well sealed.

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 the survey, all areas of the building where accessible and could be inspected either from the interior of the roof space or ground.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Bats

No evidence of the use of the building by roosting bats was found and the interior of the building is all open with no enclosed voids. As a result the proposed the works can proceed without the need for further bat survey work and carrying a low risk of impacting or harming roosting bats or their roosts.

Bat survey work to accompany planning applications is considered to be valid for 12 months from the date the survey is conducted and usually needs to be updated if it falls outside of this.

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 mitigation needed.

6.2. Barn Owls

No mitigation needed.

6.3. Swallows and other bird species

No mitigation needed.

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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