

29 February 2024

FAO Mr. S. Reeves  
1 Great Close  
Culmstock  
Devon  
EX15 3HQ



**encompass ecology ltd**

12 High Street Ide Exeter EX2 9RN

tel/fax 01392 214751

email [info@encompass-ecology.co.uk](mailto:info@encompass-ecology.co.uk)

website [www.encompass-ecology.co.uk](http://www.encompass-ecology.co.uk)

Dear Mr. Reeves,

## Preliminary Ecological Assessment – 1 Great Close, Culmstock, Cullompton, Devon, EX15 3HQ.

### Terms of Reference

We understand that you have submitted a planning application to Mid Devon District Council for a new extension on the western elevation of your property to extend the current living space within.

Due to the fact that the application will impact an existing roof-line on the dwelling, an ecological assessment has been requested to be undertaken to accompany the planning application submission and ensure that protected species have been taken in account within the planning process. Encompass Ecology have been commissioned to undertake this assessment, the results of which are presented herein.

### Approach

The approach to works included a site visit to the 1 Great Close residential property in Culmstock village and comprised a general site walk-over of the property curtilage, including an external and internal inspection, such that an ecological assessment of the site could be made in context to its surroundings and the value of the site and any ecological interests present could be established.

Due to the limited size of the study site it was not considered that an external data search was required, or would provide any information that was pertinent to the site, over and above that available on-line and could be gained through site assessment.

A site visit was made on 23 February 2024 by Julian Perrett MCIEEM CEnv of Encompass Ecology. The weather during the survey visit was cool and bright with broken sunshine, generally still and with an air temperature of 6°C. Conditions were deemed sufficient for the survey required and the following observations are presented;

### Site Description

The site currently comprises a well maintained, modern dormer type bungalow of circa 1960's era with a brick wall base and a white painted rough render finish above. The bungalow has been much updated with brown uPVC windows and guttering throughout and with a roof covering of modern, composite ridged roof tiles.

To the rear of the property on the southern side there is a large dormer type window clad in flat, composite hanging tiles to suit the existing roof covering. The western gable end of the property currently comprises a rendered wall without windows. The wall tops are secure along the gable end, with the cement fillet beneath the roof tiles having been inspected and found to be intact throughout its length, such that there were no opportunities for wildlife ingress. The dormer window, ridge tiles and wall-tops around the property are also in good condition without obvious entry points for wildlife.

An internal loft inspection was undertaken at the time of survey which documented a small, continuous, low loft space (height circa 1 metre given the dormer type living accommodation below) that extends along the entire length of the property. There are traditional wooden rafters and central ridge-board present, covered in a traditional bitumen type under-felt, typical for this age of property.

**encompass ecology ltd**

registered office 12 High Street Ide Exeter EX2 9RN

company registration number 5552567

Outside, on the western side of the property, within the anticipated footprint of the planned extension, there is a concrete path and area of amenity grassland with dominant Rye grass, Common daisy, White clover and occasional Dandelion present, all common species.

### **Species of Conservation Interest**

The study site was searched for evidence of bats and breeding birds since these faunal groups would present the most obvious constraints to the alterations proposed.

With regards to breeding birds, the double ridged pan tiles present on the roof of the property were all tight fitting and secure, without breakages. The wall tops around the property were also secure without any potential ingress for wildlife, see *photographs*. There was no evidence of breeding birds using the property, either outside of within the loft space and without obvious entry points, breeding birds are not considered to be a constraint to the plans proposed.

It should be remembered that all breeding birds are protected during the nesting period, generally from 01 March to mid-August. This protection is afforded through the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended under which it is a legal offence to damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built. It is always recommended that a check for any bird nesting should be undertaken by an a competent contractor prior to the commencement of works if such works cannot be undertaken outside of the bird breeding season.

In so far as bat presence, the exterior of the property was surveyed by eye and using binoculars along the length of the wall-tops, with especial attention paid to the western gable end and roof areas throughout. There was no evidence of any bat droppings along the wall-tops or elsewhere around the property that would indicate likely bat presence and no potential points of entry. Coupled with the lack of any indications of bat usage within the loft area, then bats are not considered to be present and are not a constraint to the works planned. Currently, no mitigation is required.

Bats are protected under schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended, the European Habitats Directive (Habitat Regulations 1994), Countryside and Rights of Way Act CROW 2000 and the Habitat Regulations 2012, that confer special protection to bats and their roosting sites.

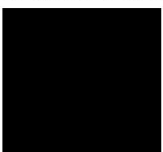
### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

From the survey undertaken no evidence of bats or breeding birds were found at the 1 Great Close property and hence these species groups are not a constraint to the plans proposed and no further surveys are required.

In accordance with NPPF guidance we would suggest a biodiversity enhancement through the provision of one retro fitted swift box to the new western gable end of the proposed extension, a type of bird box that provides nesting opportunities for a variety of species. We would consider that an in-built bird box would not be suitable on an exposed western facing elevation. Given the low level eaves on both the northern and southern elevations of the bungalow, the western elevation poses the most suitable location. This approach can be seen to work well on the adjacent property to the east in which similar nest boxes are likely being used by House Sparrows.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch should you require any further information or if you have any further questions.

Yours sincerely,



**Julian Perrett** BSc. MSc. MCIEM CEnv  
Director  
Encompass Ecology Ltd

## Site Photographs



**Photograph 1:** Existing western gable end of 1 Great Close, Culmstock property.



**Photograph 2:** Typical wall-top detail showing well-maintained nature of the property and lack of potential ingress for wildlife into property.



**Photograph 3:** Internal view of loft space showing low ridge height.



**Photograph 4:** Type of retro-fitted swift box to be placed on new western gable end to provide a general bird nesting enhancement (these types of boxes are used by a variety of species).