



BAT, BARN OWL AND NESTING BIRD SURVEY

on

LEYS COTTAGE, ST BURYAN, CORNWALL

January 2024



Wheal Grey Ecology Ltd

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**BAT, BARN OWL AND NESTING BIRD SURVEY ON
LEYS COTTAGE, ST BURYAN, CORNWALL**

O.S. Grid Ref: SW 4097 2576

Survey date: 31st 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_Leys Cottage, St Buryan_Final 1

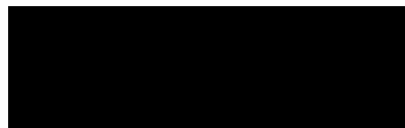
Report for: Ms Heather Ley

Report No: 23-080/IGW/Leys Cottage, St Buryan_BBONB

Report completed: 9th February 2024

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

Debra Barnard MBBCh Director

Signature:**Date:**13th February 2024

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Wheal Grey Ecology Ltd were instructed by Mr Gary Wilson, Architectural Technician/Draughtsman, on behalf of the client Ms Heather Ley to carry out a visual inspection on Leys Cottage, St Buryan, Cornwall looking for evidence of use of the building by Bats, Barn Owls and Nesting Birds. The proposal is to strip and renew the slate covering on the north facing slope of the roof.

The survey was undertaken at midday on 31st January 2024 and the weather during the survey was sunny and still with 80% cloud cover; the temperature was 11°C.

2. DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE

2.1. Description of Building

The building subject to this survey is a two storey mid-terrace stone cottage with a pitched roof, the north facing slope is covered with scantle slate and the south slope being covered with composite slate. The roof line is continuous with the attached cottages, with a chimney in the dividing walls. It has a whitewashed wall to the north with finished granite clad wall to the south facing the church, see Photos 1 and 2. The cottage faces a lane to the north and there is a small enclosed garden, laid to grass, to the south.



Photo 1. Showing the cottage from the north



Photo 2. Showing the cottage from the south

Internally there is a single roof void over the building which runs the length of the building from the interior of one stone partition gable end to another. It is open from the floor of the roof void, which is covered with fibreglass insulation to the underside of the roof, the north slope of which is unlined and the south side being lined. The roof is supported by wide spaced timber trusses with no crossing timbers, see Photos 3 and 4.



Photos 3 and 4. Showing the roof void over the house

Externally the eaves on the northern face of the building have a gap between the fascia board and the wall, the length of the building, but this is attached to the wall plate meaning there are no hidden cavities. On the southern face of the building the eaves appear well sealed as do the ridge tiles.

2.2. Surrounding landscape

The property is located within the village of St Buryan in the far west of Cornwall. It is surrounded by dwellings with small gardens with the church to the south. The village is surrounded by fields laid to pasture or used for arable crop production bounded by poorly vegetated Cornish hedges, see Figure 1.

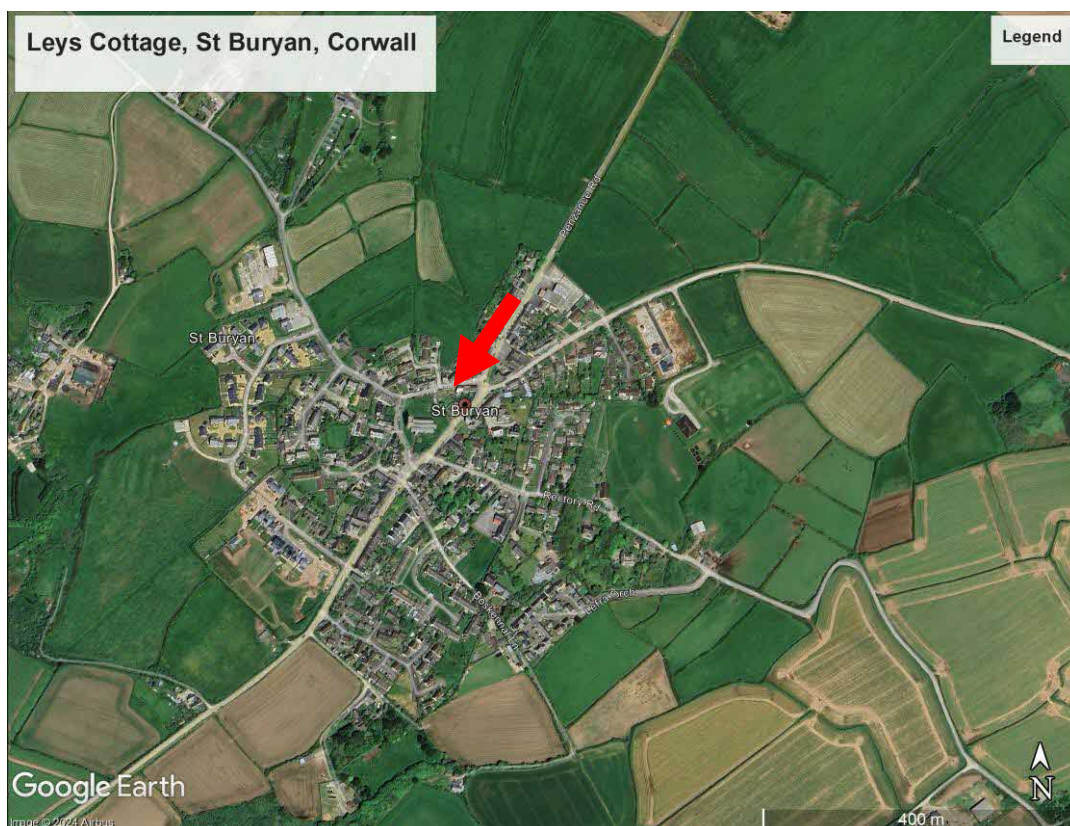


Figure 1. Google Earth image showing the location of the property (red arrow) and surrounding landscape

The habitats surrounding the property represent reasonable bat foraging habitat. The surrounding area is known to be used by a number of species of bat including Common and Soprano Pipistrelles, Brown Long-eared bats, Whiskered bats and occasional Lesser Horseshoes with roosts belonging to these species known to occur in the 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 the building was thoroughly searched.

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

The building was carefully searched from the ground and within the roof void. There were no significant limitations on the survey.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Bats

As no evidence of the use of this building by roosting bats was found, and it appeared well sealed, 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 sought. 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.

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 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 needed.

6.3. Swallows and other bird species

New nesting opportunities for birds could be incorporated into the building by building in or mounting prefabricated nest boxes onto the exterior of the building. This would help to maintain 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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