



Wheal Grey
Ecology Ltd



BAT, BARN OWL AND NESTING BIRD SURVEY

on

**COTTAGES ATTACHED TO THE OLD VICARAGE,
ST NEWLYN EAST, NEWQUAY, CORNWALL**

March 2024



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**BAT, BARN OWL AND NESTING BIRD SURVEY ON COTTAGES
ATTACHED TO THE OLD VICARAGE, ST NEWLYN EAST, NEWQUAY,
CORNWALL**

O.S. Grid Ref: SW 82880 56397

Survey date: 20th March 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_The Old Vicarage, St Newlyn East_Final 1

Report for: Mr Richard Waite

Report No: 23-121/PC/The Old Vicarage, St Newlyn East_BBONB

Report completed: 24th March 2024

Report Sign off

**Document checked and
approved for issue by:**

Debra Barnard MBBCh Director

Signature:



Date:

26th March 2024



1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Wheal Grey Ecology Ltd were instructed by Mr Richard Waite to carry out a visual inspection on a pair of cottages attached to The Old Vicarage, St Newlyn East, Newquay, Cornwall looking for evidence of use of the building by Bats, Barn Owls and Nesting Birds. The proposal is to fit solar panels onto the two slopes of the roof, either mounted onto rails or set into the roof, which will require areas of the slates to be stripped.

The survey was undertaken in the early afternoon on 20th March 2024 and the weather during the survey was sunny, dry and still with 20% light cloud cover and the temperature was 13°C.

2. DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE

2.1. Description of Building

The building subject to this survey is a two storey stone building with a pitched natural slate covered roof, a gable end to the north and is attached to the old rectory to the south with a sloping roof between the two at this end. This building is split into two cottages which are accessed from doors in the eastern side of the building. The western side of the building has no windows and backs onto an adjacent property. The eaves are lined with fascia boards with the northern gable end being lined with a row of hanging slates. The northern and western walls are bare stone with the eastern wall having been painted white, see Photos 1 and 2.



Photo 1. Showing the building from the east



Photo 2. Showing the building from the north east

Internally there are two small roof voids above the building, separated by a stone internal partition wall. The rooms on the 1st floor of the building are built into the roof structure, with the small roof void above. The roof voids are open from the floor of the roof void, which is lined with fibreglass insulation, to the underside of the roof which is lined with breathable roofing membrane, see Photos 3 and 4.



Photo 3. Showing the roof void over the southern end of the building



Photo 4. Showing the roof void over the northern end of the building

Externally the roof covering, ridge tiles and eaves along the eastern side of the building appear very well sealed. However, along the western side of the building there is a cavity behind the fascia board the length of the building giving access to the wall tops above, and gaps behind the hanging slates on the northern gable end.

2.2. Surrounding landscape

The building subject to this survey is located close to the centre of the village of St Newlyn East in Mid Cornwall. It is surrounded by houses set in small gardens with a large church with a graveyard laid to grass to the south. Beyond the edges of the village is open countryside comprising fields laid to pasture or used for arable crop production bound by Cornish hedges with streamlined valleys with rivers in their bottoms to the east and west with an area of woodland to the south, see Figure 1.



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



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The habitats surrounding the property represents good urban bat foraging habitat which is fairly close to open countryside. The surrounding area is known to be well used by a range of species of bat, including Common and Soprano Pipistrelles, Brown Long-eared bats, Whiskered bats and Lesser and Greater Horseshoes with roosts belonging to a number of these species known to occur nearby including small numbers of Brown Long-eared bats in the adjacent building.

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 during this survey with no bat droppings being seen in the roof voids. However, the exterior of the building does support features with the potential to be used for roosting by bats, namely the gaps behind the fascia boards or hanging tiles on the northern gable end and western side of the building both of which also have access to the wall tops above.

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 but there are gaps creating access to the wall tops on the northern gable end, behind the hanging tiles, and western elevation, behind the fascia board

4.4. Limitations

The roof voids could only be inspected from the loft hatches but the full length of the voids could be viewed.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Bats

No evidence of the use of the roof voids over the building by roosting bats was found and the roof covering and ridges appear well sealed. However the eaves on the northern gable end and along the western side of the building do support features with the potential to be used by roosting bats.

It should be possible to undertake the proposed works without damaging the potential roosting sites, as the eaves, fascia boards/hanging tiles and slates covering the wall tops should not be directly impacted. The works are also only proposed to be of short duration and it should be possible, through the careful timing of the works, to avoid significantly disturbing any bats which may make use of these features. The works should be timed to occur outside the peak active bat survey season, May to the end of September, to ensure only small number of bats would be present. Gaps between any scaffold and the eaves should also be maintained to allow any bats present to exit their roosting sites.

As long as the eaves, fascia boards/hanging tiles and slates covering the wall tops are not impacted by the works and they are carried out outside the peak active bat season the proposed works could proceed without the need for further bat survey work and carrying a low to negligible risk of significantly disturbing or harming roosting bats or damaging or destroying a bat roost.

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

Care should be taken to ensure nesting birds are not adversely impacted by the works. Nesting sites would not be impacted but care should be taken to ensure access to them is not obstructed.

6. MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENTS

6.1. Bats

No significant evidence of the use of the building by roosting bats was found. If any roosting sites are present they will not be directly impacted by the works, and will be retained, and so no mitigation is required.

6.2. Barn Owls

No mitigation needed.

6.3. Swallows and other bird species

The gaps at the eaves will be retained so no mitigation is required.

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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