

Wheal Grey
Ecology Ltd



BAT, BARN OWL AND NESTING BIRD SURVEY

on

**BUILDINGS A, C & E AT TREMAYNE FARM,
CROWAN, CORNWALL**

September 2023



Wheal Grey Ecology Ltd

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**BAT, BARN OWL AND NESTING BIRD SURVEY ON BUILDINGS A,
C & E AT TREMAYNE FARM, CROWAN, CORNWALL**

O.S. Grid Ref: SW 644 348

Survey date: 26th September 2023

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: 1 hours

Taxonomic groups covered: Bats, Barn Owls and Nesting Birds

Report author: Simon Barnard BSc (Hons) MSc CEcol MCIEEM

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Report for: Mr Richard Wooldridge, HPA Architects

Report No: 22-378/HPA/Buildings A, C & E at Tremayne Farm_BBONB

Report completed: 30th September 2023

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

Debra Barnard MBBCh Director

Signature:**Date:**13th October 2023

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Wheal Grey Ecology Ltd were instructed by Mr Richard Wooldridge, of HPA Architects, on behalf of the clients to carry out a visual inspection on three agricultural buildings, A, C and E, used until recently to house poultry at Tremayne Farm, Cowan, Cornwall looking for evidence of use of the buildings by Bats, Barn Owls and Nesting Birds. The proposal is to apply for planning permission, under class Q permitted development, to convert them to create a number of dwellings. Building A was previously surveyed in January 2023, and was not found to be used by roosting bats and was inspected as part of this visit.

The survey was undertaken in the afternoon on 26th September 2023. The weather during the survey was cloudy but dry with a light breeze with 90% cloud cover and the temperature was 19°C.

2. DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE

2.1. Description of Buildings

The buildings covered by this survey comprise three detached poultry sheds. Building A is a two storey building, located close to the centre of the original poultry farm, with Building C and E being almost identical single storey buildings, located in a field to the north east of the main complex, see Diagram 1.

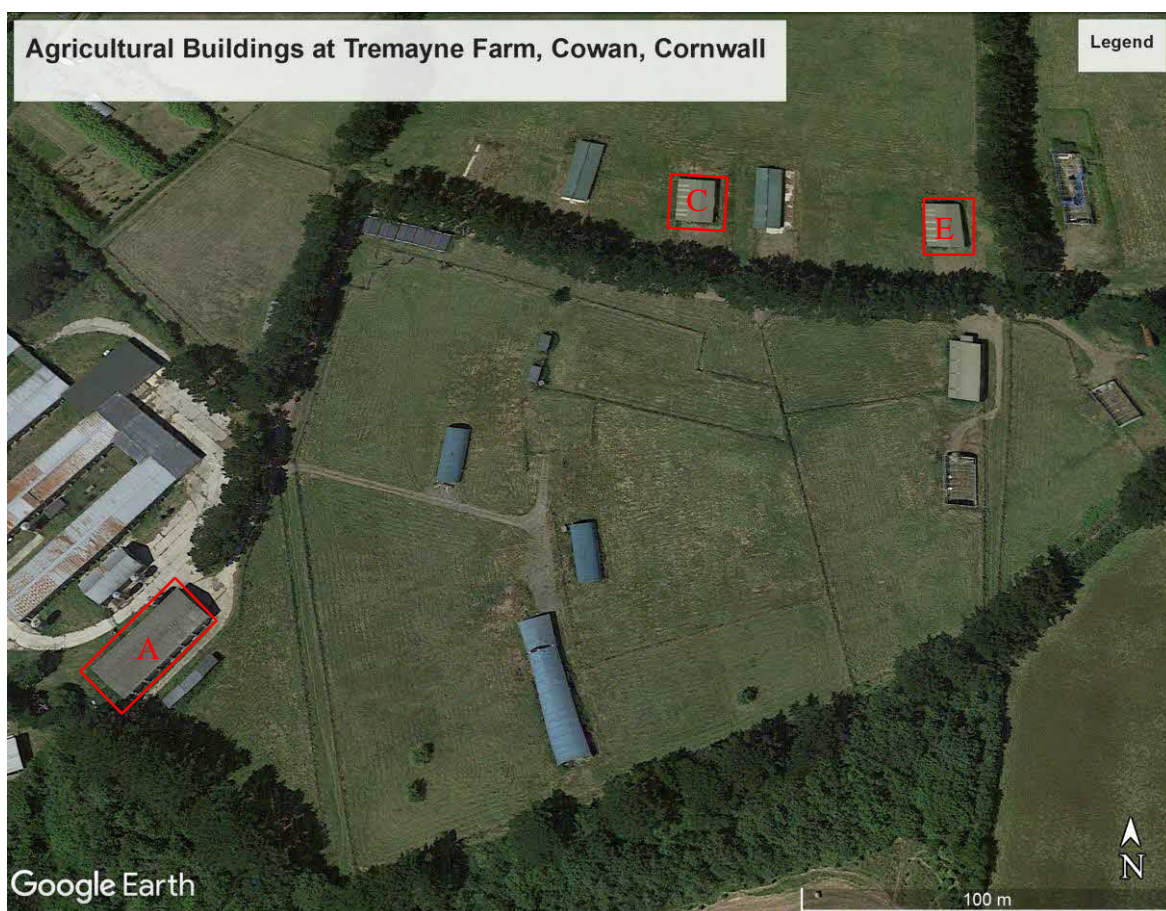


Diagram 1. Showing the buildings covered by this survey outlined in red

Building A

Building A is a standalone rectangular poultry shed built from a timber frame clad internally with ply wood and externally with box section metal sheeting. There are shutters along the north western side of the building and the flues of vents on the south eastern side of the building, see Photos 1 and 2. The ground floor has a large open room to the south east, with a small room to the north east and has a concrete floor, see Photo 3. The 1st floor is also divided into two rooms with the main room being open from the floor to the underside of the roof which has been sprayed with foam insulation, see Photo 4.



Photo 1. Showing Building A
from the south west



Photo 2. Showing Building A
from the east



Photo 3. Showing the ground
floor of Building A



Photo 4. Showing the 1st floor of Building A

Externally there are no significant features likely to be used by roosting bats and all areas were fully accessible and carefully inspected.

Buildings B and C

Buildings B and C are almost identical, they have pitched roofs covered with box section metal sheeting and walls clad with vertical timber boards with small gaps in between each board. Within the roof sheeting are plastic roof lights meaning the interior of the building is light. The buildings are

supported by light weight steel frames with large doorways in the ends and sides of the building, some of which are open, see Photos 5 to 10.



Photo 5. Showing Building C from the south



Photo 6. Showing Building C from the north



Photo 7. Showing the interior of Building C



Photo 8. Showing Building E from the south



Photo 9. Showing Building E from the north



Photo 10. Showing the interior of Building E

2.2. Surrounding landscape

The buildings are located in the open countryside, comprising small fields laid to pasture and used for arable crop production bounded by well vegetated and tree lined Cornish hedges to the south east of the village of Praze-an-Beeble with the well wooded Clowance Estate to the west, an old redundant railway line nearby and other bands and blocks of woodland with a number of streams, ponds and reservoirs nearby.

The habitats in the surrounding landscape represents good bat foraging habitat which is well linked into the surrounding landscape and nearby areas of woodland. The area is known to be well used by a range of species of bat including Common Pipistrelles, Whiskered bats, Natterer's, Brown Long-eared bats, Noctules and Lesser and Greater Horseshoes. A number of these species are known to roost in the area.

3. METHODS

3.1. Bats

The buildings were carefully inspected internally and externally, where access allowed, for evidence of the use of the buildings 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 buildings and features of the buildings 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 buildings 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 15 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 10 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 these buildings by roosting bats were found, the buildings were carefully inspected and fully accessed and were found not to support any significant features with the potential to be used by roosting bats.

4.2. Barn Owls

No evidence of the use of these buildings by Barn Owls was found.

4.3. Swallows and other bird species

Within Building E a bird's nest was noted on top of the steel frame against the northern gable end, see Photo 11.



Photo 11. Showing the birds nest noted on top of the steel frame against the northern gable end of building E

4.4. Limitations

There were no significant limitations on this survey.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Bats

As no evidence of the use of any of these buildings by roosting bats was found, no further survey work is necessary, and the proposed works can proceed with a very low to negligible risk of disturbing/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 birds are not nesting within the buildings when works commence. A careful inspection of the buildings for the presence of nesting birds and active nests should be carried out immediately prior to the work starting. If nesting birds are found to be present the works in the vicinity of these nests will need to be suspended until after the chicks have left the nest and the nest is no longer considered to be active. This is because birds are protected by law whilst nesting.

6. MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENTS

6.1. Bats

No evidence of the use of these buildings 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 required.

6.3. Swallows and other bird species

New nesting opportunities for a range of species of birds could be incorporated into the converted buildings by building in or mounting prefabricated nest boxes onto the exterior of the buildings. This would help to enhance 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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