Preliminary Bat & Bird Assessment

Site:

The Moorings, Tresco, Isles of Scilly, TR24 0PW

Grid Reference: SV 8934 1560

23rd March 2021

Version 1

Plan for Ecology Ltd
Tremough Innovation Centre
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Document Control:

Site Name:	The Moorings, Tresco, Isles of Scilly, TR24 0PW
OS Grid Reference:	SV 8934 1560
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Document Approved by:	Kim Jelbert
Client:	Tresco Estate
Report Reference Number:	P4E2262
Version:	01
Date:	23rd March 2021

Declaration:

"The information, evidence and advice, which we have prepared and provided is true, and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management's (CIEEM) Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions."

Kim Jelbert	
Chloe Balmer	

Report Lifespan:

Ecological features can change over time, particularly if site management/ use changes. Typically, Preliminary Bat and Bird Assessments are valid for one year (until March 2022).

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Summary

Bat evidence?	The Moorings, Tresco was visually inspected for evidence of roosting bats on 18th March 2021. Evidence of roosting bats was noted in the form of a number of mixed-age bat droppings observed within the main roof void of the building (void 2). In addition, there is a small number of external features with potential to be used by roosting bats, and which could enable potential access for bats into the building interior. The Moorings, a confirmed bat roost, is considered to be of **'moderate suitability'** for roosting bats.
Bat mitigation recommendations?	**Two bat emergence or re-entry surveys of The Moorings are required between May and September** to inform the planning application and subsequent building works. Bat emergence/ re-entry surveys can only be undertaken between May and September, and at least one of the emergence/ re-entry surveys should be undertaken between May and August. **DNA analysis of droppings is required to confirm the species present.** The results of these surveys will be required to inform the planning application, building works and any associated Natural England mitigation licence.
Bird evidence?	No evidence of nesting bird was found within the building at 'The Moorings'. The Moorings was assessed as being of **negligible suitability** to support nesting, breeding or resting barn owls.
Bird mitigation recommendations?	Extension works (and any removal of vegetation) should either be undertaken between October and February, when birds will not be nesting, or, alternatively, preceded with a thorough search for nesting birds (to be undertaken by a suitably experienced person). If, during works, an active bird nest is uncovered, works within 5m of the nest must stop immediately (as soon as it is safe to do so) and delayed until nesting activity has ceased. Works are most likely to be delayed between April and July. Provision for nesting birds, including nesting swallows, should be made within the replacement dwelling or associated outbuildings post-development, in the form of pre-fabricated nest boxes. Further surveys for birds are not recommended as part of this assessment.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Diana Mompoloki, on behalf of the Tresco Estate, commissioned Plan for Ecology Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Bat and Bird Assessment (sometimes referred to as a Bat and Barn Owl Assessment) of The Moorings, Tresco, Isles of Scilly (OS Grid Ref: SV 89349 15603) in March 2021. The client proposes to extend the kitchen at The Moorings.

1.2 Project Administration

Property Address:	The Moorings, Tresco, Isles of Scilly, TR24 0PW
OS Grid Reference:	SV 8934 1560
Client:	Tresco Estate
Planning Authority:	Council of the Isles of Scilly
Planning Reference Number:	Unknown
Report Reference Number:	P4E2262
Proposed work:	Kitchen extension
Survey Date:	18th March 2021
Ecologists & Licence Number:	Chloe Balmer MSci (Hons) Qualifying CIEEM; Bat licence No. 2020-47040-CLS-CLS

1.3 Legislation & Planning Policy

Planning: The local planning authority has a statutory obligation to consider impacts upon protected species resulting from development. Planning permission will not be granted with outstanding ecological surveys, and if applicable an appropriate mitigation plan.

Bats: In the UK all bat species are listed on Annex IV(a) of the European Communities Habitats Directive and as such are European Protected Species (EPS). In Britain protection of bats is achieved through their inclusion on Schedule 2 of the Conservation and Habitats Regulations 2010, Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 12 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (HM Government, 1981, 2000 & 2010).

As a result of this statutory legislation it is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat/s in its roost;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a bat roost (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time);
- Possess or sell or exchange a bat (dead or alive) or part of a bat.

Works with potential to cause significant disturbance to roosting bats may require a European Protected Species (EPSL) licence or Bat Mitigation Class Licence (CL21) from Natural England

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before works can legally commence. Works likely to result in less significant disturbance may be carried out under a Bat Mitigation Method Statement. The magnitude of disturbance and therefore the requirement for an EPSL, Bat Mitigation Class Licence or method statement is assessed on a case by case basis by the bat ecologist. The Bat Mitigation Method Statement or EPSL must be prepared and/or applied for by a suitably experienced and licenced bat ecologist. Where planning permission is required, the appropriate licence cannot be obtained until planning permission has been granted.

Birds: In Britain the nests (whilst in use or being built) and eggs of wild birds are protected against taking, damage and destruction under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (HM Government, 1981). The barn owl (*Tyto alba*) is listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (HM Government, 1981); this legislation makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally capture, injure or kill a barn owl;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a barn owl whilst nesting;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a dependent young barn owl.

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2.0 Methodology

The ecologist (Chloe Balmer) assessed the suitability of the buildings and the surrounding habitat to support bats and birds. A high-power torch was used to illuminate all accessible areas of the buildings with potential to support roosting bats and roosting/ nesting birds. The ecologist searched for signs of bats and birds including droppings, staining, feeding remains, bird nests, barn owl pellets and liming.

The assessment was carried out in accordance with the 'Bat Survey for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines' produced by the Bat Conservation Trust (Collins, 2016).

2.1 Ecological Evaluation

Potential bat roosts identified during the visual inspection of the buildings were categorised as to their suitability in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2016) as described below:

Negligible: negligible features with potential to support roosting bats.

Low: one or more features with potential to support individual bats on an occasional basis. Unlikely to support large numbers of bats.

Moderate: one or more features with potential to support roosting bats but unlikely to be of high conservation status.

High: one or more features with potential to support large numbers of bats on a regular basis.

2.2 Limitations

All areas of the buildings were fully accessible but the two roof voids present at The Moorings were viewed only from the loft hatch. Weather during the survey was in line with seasonal norms i.e., dry with light air, sunny, no cloud and a temperature of 6°C. There are no limitations associated with weather conditions. The buildings support exterior features that could not be fully inspected and provide potential roosting locations for bats.

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3.0 Assessment Results

3.1 Site Description

The Moorings is located on the eastern coast of the island of Tresco, Isles of Scilly, within Old Grimsby, *c.* 0.8 km north-east of New Grimsby and *c.* 5.3 km north-west of Hugh Town on St Marys, Isles of Scilly. The location is rural and coastal in character, with pasture, woodland and open heathland and dunes surrounding the property. An area of Coastal Sand Dunes is present directly east of the site (*c.* <10m), and *c.* 300m south-east of the site is an area of Maritime Cliffs and Slopes, both habitats are Section 41 NERC Act (2006) / UK BAP Priority Habitats. Great Pool (Tresco) Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is present *c.* 0.8 km to the south of the site, and Pentle Bay, Merrick and Round Islands SSSI is present *c.* 0.35 km south-east of the site. Buildings in the wider area comprise a mixture of period and modern properties, outbuildings and barns. In combination these features provide potential high-quality foraging and roosting habitat for bats, and suitable nest sites, roosts and foraging habitat for birds.

3.2 Bat Assessment

The assessment was undertaken on 18th March 2021.

The building surveyed comprised a detached two-storey residential dwelling of stone construction, a single storey extension projects on the north and west elevations and a small lean-to (porch) on the south-east elevation (Figs. 1-4). The building features a pitched scantle slate roof which is largely tight with no obvious gaps. There are two chimneys on the main pitched roof, both of block construction which appears tight, although there are occasional gaps underneath the lead flashing with potential to support crevice-dwelling bats. At the eastern elevation is a porch/ lean-to projection with mono-pitched traditional slate roofs. A newer extension of large glass windows was on the southern elevation (Fig 3); here the construction and roof appeared tight with no obvious gaps.

The cottages exhibit timber fascias throughout (Fig 5), and timber soffits on the northern and southern gable ends of the main house (not on the single storey extension) (Fig 6), plastic guttering and downpipes, timber doors and timber framed glazed windows. The newer extension to the south had uPVC doors and windows. Throughout the building there are notable gaps behind the fascias and beneath the soffits and stonewall (Figs 5-6), these provide potential roosting opportunities for crevice dwelling bats.

Internally the cottages feature two roof voids; a narrow roof void above the kitchen extension on the north-west elevation (void 1; Fig 7) which is accessed from a loft hatch on the ground floor and separate larger roof void within the main house (void 2; Fig 8). Both voids were viewed only from the loft hatch.

Void 1 is a narrow, dark, well-sealed void and features thick insulation blocks between the timbers supporting the roof and the void floor, with a bitumen roof membrane lining the roof (Fig 7). The void was densely cobwebbed. The void was adjoining the wall of exposed stone. No evidence of roosting bats was found within this void, although it was not possible to fully inspect this area due to access restrictions.

Void 2 is in the apex of the main building with a shallow timber A-frame structure supporting the pitched roof (Fig 8). Within this void is a thick layer of rolled insulation between the floor joists. The roof was bitumen lined and was torn and 'sagging' in places (Fig 8). A light scattering of bat droppings was noted on the insulation (*c*. 20) (Fig 9). Although it was not possible to fully inspect this area due to access a small number bat droppings were observed within close proximity to the

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loft hatch and the droppings were characteristic of a long-eared bat spp., likely to be brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*) as the site is outside the known range of grey long-eared bat (*Plecotus austriacus*). NB: species present must be confirmed with DNA analysis of bat droppings.

The Moorings, a confirmed bat roost, was assessed as being of **'moderate suitability'** for roosting bats.

Figure 1: View of the north-western elevation of The Moorings; the existing single storey extension in the foreground will be converted as per the proposals.

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Figure 2: View of the western elevation at The Moorings.

Figure 3: View of the eastern elevation and a small lean-to (porch) and the southern elevation with a new/ 'modern' constructed single storey extension at The Moorings.

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Figure 4: View of the single storey extension on the western elevation.

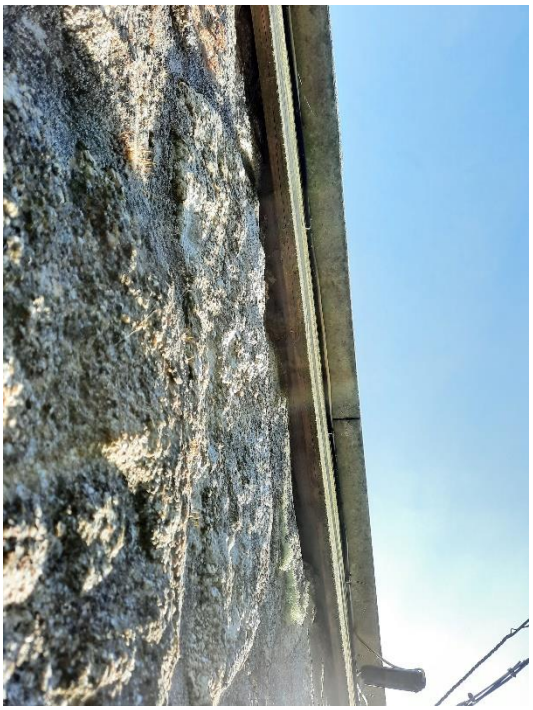

Figure 5: View of gaps beneath the timber fascia board.

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Figure 6: View of gaps beneath the timber soffits on the northern gable end at The Moorings (shown by the blue arrow).

Figure 7: Interior view of void 1, above the kitchen.

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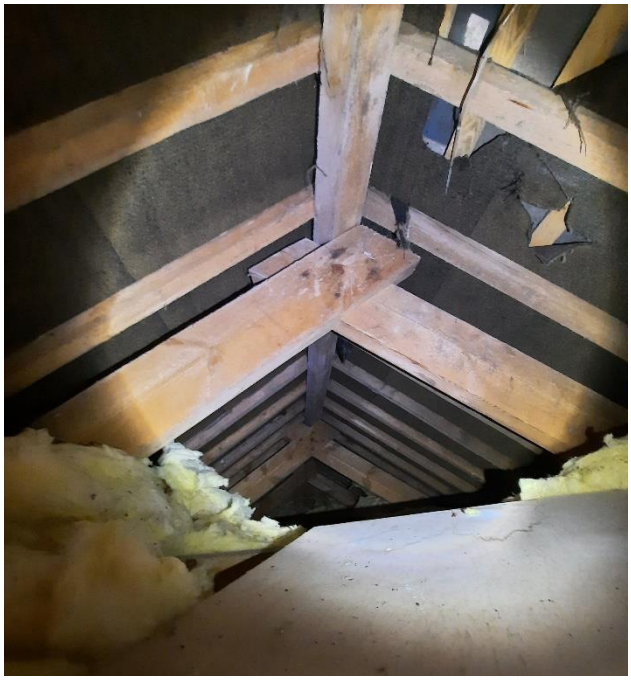

Figure 8: Interior view of void 2, above the main house; 'gappy' bitumen lining and droppings were observed on the rolled insulation.

Figure 9: View of three bat droppings (one crushed) within void 2 at The Moorings.

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3.3 Bird Assessment

No evidence of nesting bird was observed. It is likely that some vegetation will be removed to allow for the kitchen extension on the north-west elevation, this removal should be done outside of nesting bird season (April – July). No evidence of barn owl was found, with no suitable access points present. The buildings were assessed as being of **negligible suitability** to support nesting, breeding or resting barn owls.

4.0 Mitigation Recommendations

4.1 Bat Mitigation

No evidence of bats was observed within void 1 (directly impacted by proposals) but a number of bat droppings were seen within void 2 (not directly impacted by proposals), also a small number of exterior features on the building (gaps beneath the soffits and between the fascia's and wall tops) have some potential to support crevice dwelling bats and provide potential access for bats into the roof void. In accordance with best practice guidelines (Collins, 2016), the building was assessed as being of **'moderate suitability'** for roosting bats. **In accordance with the Collins (2016) a minimum of two bat emergence or re-entry surveys are required between May and September. Once of these should be undertaken between May and August.** These surveys will determine the species, number of individuals, bat access points, timings of usage and any requirement for a Natural England bat mitigation licence to permit works.

Please note that planning permission is unlikely to be granted with outstanding ecological surveys. This report must be updated with the results of the recommended further surveys or superseded with a standalone bat survey report, following provision of the final site plan and prior to submission of the planning application.

4.2 Bird Mitigation

No evidence of bird was found within The Moorings. Extension works will likely removed some of the vegetation on the western elevation and should either be undertaken between October and February, when birds will not be nesting, or, alternatively, preceded with a thorough search for nesting birds (to be undertaken by a suitably experienced person). If, during works, an active bird nest is uncovered, works within 5m of the nest must stop immediately (as soon as it is safe to do so) and delayed until nesting activity has ceased. Works are most likely to be delayed between April and July.

Provision for nesting birds, including nesting swallows, should be made within the replacement dwelling or associated outbuildings post-development, in the form of pre-fabricated nest boxes. Suitable products for swallows include the No. 10 Schwegler Swallow Nest, or equivalent. Nest boxes should be located on a north or east facing elevation. Swallow nest boxes should be located within a partially enclosed area such as a porch or outbuilding.

Further surveys for birds are not recommended as part of this assessment.

4.3 Opportunities for Biodiversity Enhancement

Net gain is described as a measurable target(s) for development projects where impacts on biodiversity are outweighed by the mitigation hierarchy approach to first avoid, and then minimise, impact including through restoration and/ or compensation (Baker *et al.,* 2019).

The biodiversity value of the site for nesting birds post-development could be enhanced by installing bird boxes within the fabric of the building, on the building exterior or within the garden

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of the property. The value of the site for invertebrates could be enhanced by installing deadwood piles within garden habitat, or bee bricks within the new building. Plan for Ecology Ltd can provide detailed recommendations upon request.

NB: suitable products are available from www.nhbs.com, www.wildcareshop.com and www.greenandblue.co.uk

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5.0 References

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