



## **BAT, BARN OWL AND NESTING BIRD SURVEY**

**on**

## **A GLASS HOUSE AT HILLDROP HOUSE, LOWERTOWN, ST MARTINS, ISLES OF SCILLY**

**August 2021**



### **Wheal Grey Ecology Ltd**

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**BAT, BARN OWL AND NESTING BIRD SURVEY ON A GLASS HOUSE AT  
HILLDROP HOUSE, LOWERTOWN,  
ST MARTINS, ISLES OF SCILLY**

**O.S. Grid Ref:** SV 9165 1615

**Survey date:** 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021

**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:** ½ hour

**Taxonomic groups covered:** Bats, Barn Owls and Nesting Birds

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

**Filename & issue number:** BBONB\_Glass House, Hilldrop House, St Martins\_Final 1

**Report for:** Mr Nathan Dean, Duchy of Cornwall

**Report No:** 20-176/DofC/ Glass House, Hilldrop House, St Martins\_BBONB

**Report completed:** 20<sup>th</sup> August 2021

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

Matt Thurlow BSc (Hons) MSc ACIEEM

**Signature:****Date:**22<sup>nd</sup> August 2021

## **1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

Wheal Grey Ecology Ltd were instructed by Mr Nathan Dean of The Duchy of Cornwall to carry out a visual inspection on a glasshouse, Hilldrop House, Lowertown, St Martins on the Isles of Scilly looking for evidence of use of the building by Bats, Barn Owls and Nesting Birds. The proposal is to apply for planning permission to replace the glass roof on the southern half of the building with corrugated cement fibre sheeting.

The survey was carried out at midday on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021. The weather was sunny and dry with very light cloud, a light breeze and the temperature was 23°C.

## **2. DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE**

### **2.1. Description of Building**

The building subject to this survey is a single storey rectangular glass house built on a north south alignment. It has gable ends, with the lower parts of the walls being stone and the upper parts of the walls being vertical timber clad or timber framed supporting glass. The northern gable end and eastern wall are solid with the upper parts of the western and southern walls being glazed or being open, the southern gable end is timber framed but unglazed being covered with a tarpaulin. The northern half of the roof is covered with corrugated cement fibre sheeting with the southern end being glazed, see photos 1 and 2.



Photo 1. Showing the glasshouse  
from the north west



Photo 2. Showing the glasshouse  
from the south west

Internally the building is divided into two rooms by a timber partition wall with an open doorway in the centre. The northern room is roofed with corrugated cement fibre sheeting and the southern room is roofed with glass. Both rooms are open from the floor to the underside of the roofs and the interiors are used for storage and to grow plants. The interior is open to outside via missing windows and a vent over the glass roofed section of the building. The building supports very few features with any potential to support roosting bats and the interior is very light and will get very warm making its use by roosting bats unlikely, see photos 3 and 4.



Photo 3. Showing the interior of  
the northern room



Photo 4. Showing the interior of  
the southern room

Externally there are no significant features with the potential to be used by roosting bats.

## **2.2. Surrounding landscape**

The building is located within Lower Town at the western end of the Island of St. Martins. It is surrounded by a low density of houses, further glass houses, agricultural buildings and chalets immediately surrounded by small rectangular fields bounded by hedges dominated by *Pittosporum*. Beyond this to the south are sand dunes which give way to the sea with heathland and coastal scrub to the north.

The habitats surrounding the property represent good bat foraging habitat and a Common Pipistrelle roost is known to be present in a building a short way to the west.

### **3. METHODS**

#### **3.1. Bats**

The building was carefully inspected internally and externally, where access allowed, for individual or groups of roosting bats using a high-power torch, ladders and an endoscope (where needed); this included looking for signs that the building is currently, recently or has been historically used for roosting by bats. This included 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 were 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 are present the interior is 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**

No evidence of the use of this building by roosting bats was found during this survey and the building was thoroughly searched.

### **4.1. Barn Owls**

No evidence of the use or occupation of this building by Barn Owls was found.

### **4.2. Swallows and other bird species**

No evidence of the use of this building by nesting birds was found during this survey. A small number of House Sparrows were noted entering and leaving the building during the survey.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1. Bats**

As no evidence of the use of this building by roosting bats was found, no further survey work is necessary, and the proposed works can proceed with a 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.

### **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 so no mitigation is required.

It would be desirable to incorporate new roosting opportunities for bats into the new building, should the owner wish to do so. This could be done fairly simply by installing/building-in purpose-built bat boxes onto/into the building. This would help to 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.

Please Note: Breathable roofing products must not be used in areas where bats could come into contact with them as they have been proven to cause bat fatalities.

### **6.2. Barn Owls**

No mitigation needed.

### **6.3. Swallows and other bird species**

No mitigation needed.

## 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.



## **REFERENCES**

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