

Preliminary Bat & Bird Assessment and Adjacent Habitat

Site:

Bottom Annexe, Tresco, Isles of Scilly

Grid Reference: SV 89252 15730

11th May 2023

Version 1



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Document Control:

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OS Grid Reference:	SV 89252 15730	
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Report Reference Number:	P4E2937	
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Date:	11 th May 2023	

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."

Caroline Davey	
Nicola Dyer	

Report Lifespan:

Ecological features can change over time, particularly if site management/ use changes. Typically, preliminary bat and bird assessments are valid for at least 12 months (until March 2024).

Version: 1



CONTENTS

SUM	IMARY	3
<u>INT</u>	RODUCTION	4
1.1	Background	
1.2	Project Administration	
1.3	LEGISLATION & PLANNING POLICY	
<u>2.0</u>	METHODOLOGY	6
2.1	ECOLOGICAL EVALUATION	6
2.2	LIMITATIONS	
<u>3.0</u>	ASSESSMENT RESULTS	7
3.1	SITE DESCRIPTION	7
3.2	BAT ASSESSMENT	7
3.3	BIRD ASSESSMENT	. 14
3.4	PHASE 1 HABITAT DISTRIBUTION	. 14
3.5	NOTABLE SPECIES	. 15
<u>4.0</u>	MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS	. 17
4.1	Bat Mitigation	. 17
4.2	BIRD MITIGATION	. 17
4.3	Habitat Mitigation	. 17
4.4	OPPORTUNITIES FOR BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT	. 18
<u>5.0</u>	REFERENCES	. 19
<u>6.0</u>	APPENDIX 1 MAP 1: PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY	<u>. 20</u>
<u>7.0</u>	APPENDIX 2 : HABITAT CODES	. 22
<u>8.0</u>	APPENDIX 3: PHASE 1 HABITAT PLANT LIST	. 23

Bottom Annexe, Tresco, Isles of Scilly

Project Reference No: P4E2937

Version: 1



Summary

Bat evidence?

The Bottom Annexe on Tresco, Isles of Scilly, was visually inspected for evidence of roosting bats on 24th March 2023. Evidence of bats was found within the roof void of the building in the form of several bat droppings. External features were also noted on the building with potential to support roosting bats and/or permit bats access to the building interior.

The Bottom Annexe was assessed as being of 'moderate suitability' for roosting bats.

Bat mitigation recommendations?

A minimum of two bat emergence or re-entry surveys and a static detector survey of the building are required to inform the planning application and subsequent building works. DNA analysis of bat droppings from the roof void will also be required. Bat emergence/ re-entry surveys and static detector 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, in line with best-practice guidelines.

Bird evidence?

No evidence of nesting birds, including barn owl, were noted within the Bottom Annexe. The building is assessed as being of 'negligible suitability' for barn owls.

Bird mitigation recommendations?

Works to the building and any clearance of vegetation around the building should 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 an ecologist) immediately prior to works commencing.

There is opportunity to make provision for nesting birds within the fabric of the new building or on the building exterior to enhance the value of the site for birds, post-development. No further surveys for birds are recommended.

Habitats & vascular plants?

There are no habitats of ecological importance in the immediate vicinity of Bottom Annexe.

A Nationally Scarce species, balm-leaved figwort (Scrophularia scorodonia) was identified on site in several locations. If vegetation clearance of the introduced shrub areas around Bottom Annexe becomes necessary, translocation of this plant to a site nearby is recommended.

Two invasive plants, three-cornered leek (*Allium triquetrum*) and montbretia (*Crocosmia crocosmiiflora*) (Schedule 9, Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, as amended), have been identified on site. If these areas are to be disturbed the works must be informed with a post planning, pre-construction invasive plant method statement.

Bottom Annexe, Tresco, Isles of Scilly

Project Reference No: P4E2937

Version: 1



Introduction

1.1 Background

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) and a habitat assessment of adjacent habitats at Bottom Annexe, Tresco, Isles of Scilly. (Grid Ref: SV 89252 15730) in February 2023. The client proposes to demolish the existing building and construct new accommodation in its place.

1.2 Project Administration

Property Address: Bottom Annexe, Tresco, Isles of Scilly

OS Grid Reference: SV 89252 15730

Client: Tresco Estate

Planning Authority: Cornwall Council

Planning Reference Number: Unknown

Report Reference Number: P4E2937

Proposed work: Demolition and re-build

Survey Date: 24th March 2023

Ecologist & Licence Number: Caroline Davey BSc. (hons) MSc; ACIEEM, bat licence no:

2022-10817-CL18-BAT; (Accredited Agent under CL29/00037 (barn owl) held by Kim Jelbert BSc. (Hons) MSc. PhD. MCIEEM (Registered Consultant RC224)

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 Britain, the protection of European Protected Species (EPS) such as bats is achieved through their inclusion on Schedule 2 of the Conservation and Habitats Regulations 2019 (as amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (HM Government, 2019)), 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.

Version: 1



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 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. Bat licences and Method Statements 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.

Version: 1



2.0 Methodology

A suitably qualified and experienced ecologist assessed the suitability of Bottom Annexe and the surrounding habitat to support bats and birds. A high-power torch was used to illuminate all accessible areas of the building 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).

The habitats immediately adjacent to Bottom Annexe were mapped according to the Phase 1 Habitat Survey/ UK Habitat Classification nomenclature. The survey identified the habitats present and their associated plant species (JNCC, 2010), and assessed the potential of the site to support protected species. The surveyor also noted down the presence of invasive plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended) and vascular plant species of ecological importance within the site.

2.1 Ecological Evaluation

Bat roosts

Potential bat roosts identified during the visual inspection of the building 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.

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

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

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

Habitats and other ecological features

Habitats and other ecological features recorded within the Bottom Annexe site were evaluated within a geographical context in accordance with the CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (CIEEM, 2018). Value is assigned in decreasing order of importance as follows: International/ European, UK, Regional (southwest), County, District, Parish, Local, within the Zone of Influence, and Negligible.

2.2 Limitations

There are three separate roof voids in Bottom Annexe, each accessible by individual roof hatches. The floors of the voids are un-boarded, so the assessment was undertaken from the entrance of each roof hatch. It is likely that further bat droppings would have been observed had it been possible to access the whole of the roof space.

The exterior of the building was viewed from ground level. It is possible that Potential Roost Features (PRFs) in the upper parts of the building were not visible from ground level. Weather during the survey was in line with seasonal norms (12°C, light air, sunny intervals and part cloud); there are no limitations associated with weather conditions.

Version: 1



3.0 Assessment Results

3.1 Site Description

Bottom Annexe is located in Old Grimsby, on the north-east coast of Tresco, Isles of Scilly *c.* 5km north of Hugh Town on St Mary's and *c.* 3.5km west of Higher Town on St Martin's, *c.*48 km west of the mainland at Land's End.

The Isles of Scilly Complex Special Area of Conservation (SAC) lies *c.* 171m east of Bottom Annexe at its closest point on the shoreline. The Castle Down (Tresco) Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies *c.* 370m west of Bottom Annexe and the Pentle Bay, Merrick and Round Islands SSSI lies *c.* 473m south-east of Bottom Annexe.

The Isles of Scilly Complex SAC has been designated for its pristine marine environment and diverse fauna. Rocky reefs in Scilly stretch from the intertidal to deep circalittoral reefs and are recognised for the diversity of species they support. The Castle Down SSSI has been designated for its maritime heathland and Merrick and Round Islands SSSI has been recognised for its transition from dunes to lichen-rich heathland and uninhabited islands important for breeding seabirds.

The Isles of Scilly are unique in their importance for nature conservation. Due to the archipelago's southerly location, coastal influences and range of exposures, species assemblages here are different from the mainland UK. A range of warmer water species are noticeably more prevalent on Scilly.

The wider area comprises coastal heathland, beaches and low cliffs, open sea and the mature trees of the subtropical garden at Abbey Garden. Small fields and hedges, and mainly period properties with small gardens make up the rest of the surrounding habitat on Tresco.

In combination, these features provide potentially high-quality foraging and roosting habitat for bats, and suitable nest sites, roosts and foraging habitat for birds.

3.2 Bat Assessment

The visual assessment of the building was undertaken on 24th March 2023.

Exterior

The Bottom Annexe is a single storey building of rendered concrete block wall, with slate effect roof tiles and concrete ridge tiles (Figure 1: East elevation, Figures 2 and 3: West elevation, Figure 4: North elevation, Figure 5: South elevation). The roof is pitched with one flue and two vents on the west elevation (Figure 6). Three roof slates were identified on the west elevation as being slightly raised which may be providing access for bats into the interior of the roof (Figure 7). Timber fascia boards are present all around the building with some small gaps on the west elevation (Figure 8). The gable end of the north elevation has a fascia board at the top of the wall of the gable end. There are very small gaps behind this fascia board which may provide crevices for bats and allow bats access into the interior. The fascia board on the east elevation appears to be completely tight and the roof structure appears tight in the most part with no obvious access points or gaps that could be utilised by crevice dwelling bats. However, there are replacement roof slates that may provide an access point for bats on the east elevation (Figure 9).

<u>Interior</u>

Bottom Annexe has three separate roof voids that are accessible from individual roof hatches. The location of the roof hatches can be seen on Map 1 (Appendix 1).

Roof void 1: The roof space is hot and dark with a timber roof structure lined with an impermeable plastic liner (Figure 10). The floor of the roof void is covered in old piles of roofing insulation. The hot water tank is housed here. This void is un-boarded so the inspection was made from the hatch. No droppings were observed from the survey point.

Roof void 2: This roof void has an identical structure to roof void 1 and the floor of the roof void is also covered in piles of old roofing insulation. It is very hot and dark in this roof void, possibly due to the impermeable plastic roof liner. This void is un-boarded so the inspection was made from the hatch. No droppings were observed from the survey point.

Roof void 3: This section of roof void has the same timber structure as roof voids 1 and 2 but has been lined with bitumen roofing felt (Figure 11). This roof void is much cooler than voids 1 and 2. The floor of the void also has piles of old roofing insulation and was un-boarded so the inspection was made from the hatch. Several bat droppings c. 3 droppings were identified close to the hatch entrance (Figure 12).

As droppings were identified during the survey and the building supports a number of features that could support roosting bats, the Bottom Annexe was assessed as being of 'moderate suitability' for supporting roosting bats.



Figure 1: View of the east elevation of Bottom Annexe





Figure 2: View of the west elevation of Bottom Annexe



Figure 3: View of the west elevation of Bottom Annexe

Version: 1





Figure 4: View of the north elevation of Bottom Annexe



Figure 5: View of the south elevation of Bottom Annexe





Figure 6: View of the flue and vents on the roof of the west elevation



Figure 7: Raised roof slates on the west elevation of Bottom Annexe





Figure 8: Gaps behind the fascia boards on the west elevation



Figure 9: Replacement roof slates on the east elevation that may provide an access point for bats





Figure 10: Roof structure of roof voids 1 and 2. Impermeable plastic liner and timber frame



Figure 11: Roof structure of void 3. Bitumen roofing felt and timber frame



Figure 12: Droppings on the roofing felt close to the hatch entrance of roof void 3

3.3 Bird Assessment

There was no evidence of barn owls using Bottom Annexe and there is no suitable access for barn owl into the building. In the absence of evidence, Bottom Annexe was assessed as being of 'negligible suitability' for nesting, breeding or resting barn owls.

There was no other evidence of nesting birds at Bottom Annexe.

3.4 Phase 1 Habitat Distribution

A total of five Phase 1 Habitats/ UKHab classification types were recorded within the site during the Phase 1 Habitat Survey: amenity grassland (J1.2) / (g4 66 230 700), introduced shrub (J1.4) / (u1 1150 1160), fence (J3.4) / (u1e 69) bare ground (J4) / (u1b 1231) and building (J3.6) / (u1b5).

The distribution of these habitats is shown on Map 1 (Appendix 1). UKHab classification code descriptions can be seen in Appendix 2.

All the habitats identified at Bottom Annexe are of low ecological value and are briefly described below. NB: Habitats of negligible or low ecological value may support protected or notable species.

Amenity grassland (J1.2)/ (g4 66 230 700)

A strip of amenity grassland is present on the east and west sides of Bottom Annexe. The grass is mown short and supports a reasonably diverse range of forbs and fewer grasses. Yorkshire fog and common bent are frequent with occasional red fescue and cock's-foot. Common cat's ear is abundant with frequent ribwort plantain and white clover, locally frequent common mouse-ear, and occasional scented mayweed, daisy, hogweed, common mallow and alexanders. Sheep's sorrel, prickly sow-thistle and bermuda buttercup are rare components of the grassland.

Amenity grassland is considered to have some ecological value, but only 'within the Zone of influence'.

Version: 1



Introduced shrub (J1.4) / (u1 1150 1160)

Surrounding Bottom Annexe on the west and southern aspects of the building, there is a hedge of a single ornamental species (*Olearia traversii*) traditionally planted for coastal hedging because of its salt tolerance. Further ornamental species have been planted to create a colourful planting scheme on the west side of the building. Abundant species include rock roses, hebes, Cape daisy, shasta daisy and montbretia. New Zealand flax is locally frequent, agapanthus is occasional and rose scented geranium is rarely occurring. In amongst the ornamental species other native ruderal and hedgerow species are growing. These include frequent alexanders and ribwort plantain and occasional hogweed, tree mallow, common mallow, and balm-leaved figwort.

Introduced shrub is considered to have some ecological value, but only 'within the Zone of influence' It is likely to provide some opportunities for nesting birds.

Fence (J3.4) / (u1e 69)

A timber fence is present on the east, south and west sides of Bottom Annexe.

Fences are considered to be of **'negligible'** ecological value.

Bare ground (J4) / (u1b 1231)

A paved hardstanding area is present immediately south of the building and there is a paved pathway along the west side of the building.

These areas are largely devoid of vegetation and offer limited ecological opportunities for biodiversity.

Bare ground is considered to be of 'negligible' ecological value.

Building (J3.6) / (u1b5)

The building itself is considered to be of 'negligible' ecological value, though it is likely to support notable species; i.e bats.

The assemblage of vascular plant species associated with each habitat is provided in the table at Appendix 3.

3.5 Other notable species

One vascular plant species of ecological importance was identified during the habitat survey. This is balm-leaved figwort (*Scrophularia scorodonia*) which is Nationally Scarce and listed in the Cornwall Red Data Book (Figure 13). The location of this plant can be seen on Map 1 in Appendix 1.

Steps should be taken to conserve this plant. Mitigation measures are provided in Section 4.3.

Version: 1





Figure 13: Balm-leaved figwort (Scrophularia scorondonia)

Two species listed as invasive under schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, as amended, were identified on site. These are three-cornered leek and montbretia. It is an offence to cause the spread of Schedule 9 species into the wild.

The location of Schedule 9 invasive species can be seen on Map 1 (Appendix 1). Steps should be taken to control these species. Mitigation measures are provided in Section 4.3.

The assemblage of vascular plant species associated with each habitat including Latin names is provided in the table at Appendix 3.

Version: 1



4.0 Mitigation Recommendations

4.1 Bat Mitigation

Evidence of bats was found in Bottom Annexe in the form of several bat droppings, scattered on the floor of the roof void 3, on top of the roofing insulation, close to the entrance hatch (Map 1). It was not possible to access the whole of roof void 3 or roof voids 1 and 2 during the survey so there may have been further droppings in the inaccessible areas.

Bottom Annexe also supports external features with potential to support crevice dwelling bats or which could permit bat access into the building's interior. Bottom Annexe was, therefore, assessed as being of 'moderate suitability' for roosting bats.

The client seeks permission for demolition and re-building of the Bottom Annexe to improve the staff accommodation facilities. Demolition works must be informed with at least two bat emergence or re-entry surveys undertaken between May and September; one of which should be carried out between May and August. A static detector survey between May-September of roof void 3 is also required together with DNA analysis of bat droppings found within this void. The survey information will be required to inform the planning application and subsequent demolition works. The surveys will determine the bat species present, number of individuals, bat access points and timings of usage.

Please note that planning permission will not 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 nesting birds, including barn owl, was found within the interior of Bottom Annexe. The building was, therefore, assessed as being of 'negligible suitability' for barn owl.

Although no evidence of nesting birds was observed during the survey, it is possible that birds could nest later during the year, in the main breeding season. A precautionary approach should be adopted during works. Works to the buildings and adjacent habitats should be avoided during the main bird nesting season (March to September inclusive) or preceded with a thorough search for nests, to be undertaken by an ecologist. If, during works, an active bird nest is uncovered, works 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 during the peak breeding period between April and July.

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

4.3 Habitat Mitigation

None of the habitats are deemed to be ecologically important however, the introduced shrub habitat has some potential for supporting nesting birds. See section 4.2 above for mitigation.

The Nationally Scarce balm-leaved figwort is present in various locations around Bottom Annexe. If possible, retain the habitats where this species occurs. If this is not possible, the translocation of plants to a nearby, suitable site is advised.

The works should be informed with a post-planning, pre-construction invasive plant method statement to ensure that the works do not cause the spread of Schedule 9 (WCA, 1981), species into nearby semi-natural habitats.

Version: 1



4.4 Opportunities for Biodiversity Enhancement

Biodiversity net gain is an approach to development and/or land management that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. To avoid a net loss, ecological impacts should be minimised by applying the mitigation hierarchy approach: firstly to avoid impacts, then to reduce impacts and finally to compensate for impacts. Biodiversity enhancements should be incorporated within development schemes to achieve a net gain.

The biodiversity value of the Bottom Annexe site can be enhanced in accordance with the Cornwall Planning for Biodiversity Guide (Cornwall Council, 2018). Habitats for roosting bats and nesting birds could be enhanced by installing bat and bird boxes on the exterior of the new building (on north and east elevations for bird boxes and south and west elevations for bat boxes). The value of the site for invertebrates could be enhanced by installing bee posts within garden of the site. Plan For Ecology Ltd can provide detailed recommendations upon request.

NB: suitable products are available from www.wildcareshop.com and www.qreenandblue.co.uk

Version: 1



5.0 References

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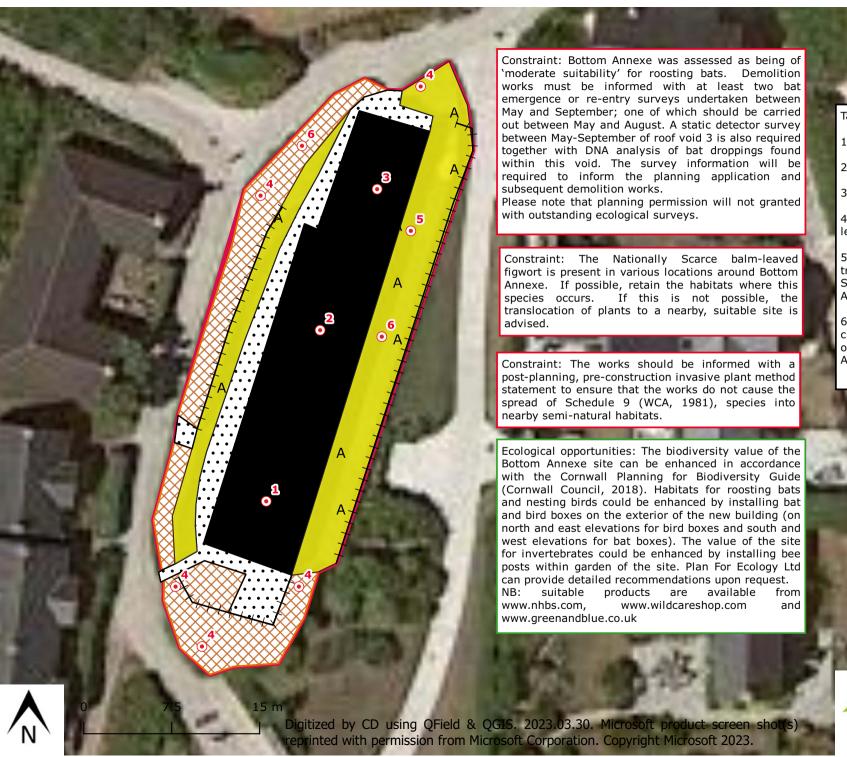
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Version: 1



6.0 Appendix 1. Map 1: Bat, Bird and Habitat Survey

Map 1: Bottom Annexe, Tresco, Bat, Bird and Habitat Survey



Target notes:

- 1. Roof void 1
- 2. Roof void 2
- 3. Roof void 3 (bat droppings found here)
- 4. Location of Nationally Scarce Balm-leaved figwort (Scrophularia scorodonia).
- 5. Location of three cornered leek (Allium triquetrum) (Invasive species listed on Sch. 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 as amended).
- 6. Location of montbretia (Crocosmia crocosmiiflora) (Invasive species listed on Sch. 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 as amended).



H Fence

Target note

Building

Introduced shrub

Amenity grassland

Bare ground

Approx. site boundary







7.0 APPENDIX 2: Habitat codes

Phase 1 Habitat type: Amenity grassland (J1.2) / UKHab classification: (g4 66 230 700)

UKHab primary code g4 - modified grassland

Secondary codes: 66 – frequently mown, 230 – garden, 700 – open space around premises

Phase 1 Habitat type: Introduced shrub (J1.4) / UKHab classification (u1 1150 1160)

UKHab primary code u1 - built up areas and gardens

Secondary codes: 1150 - flower bed, 1160 - introduced shrub

Phase 1 Habitat type: Fence (J3.4)

UKHab primary code u1e – built linear features

Secondary code: 69 - fence

Phase 1 Habitat type: bare ground (J4) / UKHab classification (u1b 1231)

UKHab primary code u1b – developed land, sealed surface

Secondary code: 1231 – permeable paving

Phase 1 Habitat type: Building (J3.6) / UK-Hab classification (u1b5)

UKHab primary code u1b5 - building

8.0 Appendix 3: Phase 1 Habitat Plant List

Latin Name	Common Name		
		5	
		Amenity grassland	Introduced shrub
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		٩	In
Agapanthus sp.	Agapanthus		0
Agrostis capillaris	Common bent	F	
Allium triquetrum	Three-cornered leek	LF	F
Arum maculatum	Lords and ladies		LA
Bellis perennis	Daisy	0	0
Cerastium fontanum	Common mouse ear	LF	
Cistus spp.	Rock rose species x 2		LF
Crocosmia crocosmiiflora	Montbretia	LF	LA
Dactylis glomerata	Cock's-foot	0	
Echium sp.	Echium species		0
Fatsia japonica	Japanese fatsia		R
Festuca rubra	Red fescue	0	
Fumaria officinalis	Common fumitory		0
Geranium molle	Dove's-foot cranesbill	0	
Hebe spp.	Hebe species x 2		LA
Hedera helix	Ivy		0
Heracleum sphondylium	Common hogweed	0	0
Holcus lanatus	Yorkshire fog	F	
Hypochaeris radicata	Common cat's ear	А	
Leucanthemum	Shasta daisy		LA
Lupin sp.	Lupin species		LA
Malva arborea	Tree mallow		0
Malva sylvestris	Common mallow	0	0
Matricaria chamomilla	Scented mayweed	0	0
Olearia traversii	Olearia		LD
Osteospermum sp.	Cape daisy		LF
Oxalis pes caprae	Bermuda buttercup	R	
Parietaria sp.	Pellitory species	0	_
Pelargonium capitatum	Rose scented geranium		R
Phormium tenax	New Zealand flax		LF .=
Plantago lanceolata	Ribwort plantain	F	LF

Version: 1



Latin Name	Common Name	Amenity grassland	Introduced shrub
Rubus fruticosus	Bramble		R
Rumex acetosella	Sheep's sorrel	R	
Rumex obtusifolius	Broad-leaved dock	0	0
Scrophularia scorodonia	Balm-leaved figwort		LO
Senecio jacobaea	Common ragwort		R
Smyrnium olusatrum	Alexanders	O/LF	F/LA
Sonchus asper	Prickly sow-thistle	R	
Sonchus oleraceus	Smooth sow-thistle		0
Trifolium repens	White clover	F	
Urtica dioica	Nettle	0	0