

**RESULTS OF A VISUAL ASSESSMENT
AND FURTHER BAT SURVEY WORK ON
VERONICA LODGE, GARRISON WALK,
HUGH TOWN, ISLES OF SCILLY**

September 2020



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RESULTS OF A VISUAL ASSESSMENT AND FURTHER BAT SURVEY WORK ON VERONICA LODGE, GARRISON WALK, HUGH TOWN, ISLES OF SCILLY

O.S. Grid Ref: SV 9004 1054

Survey dates: Visual survey - 26th September 2020
Emergence surveys: 26th and 28th September 2020

Main 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)

Time spent on site: 1 x ¾ hour – Visual survey
2 x 1 ½ hours – Emergence survey
2 x 2 hours – Dawn re-entry surveys

Taxonomic groups: Bats

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

Report compiled by: Simon Barnard BSc (Hons) MSc CEcol MCIEEM

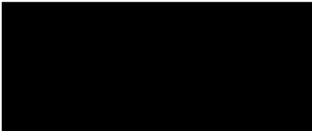
Report completed: 21st October 2020

Filename & issue number: Further Bats_Veronica Lodge, St Marys, I of S_Final 1

Report for: Mr Nathan Dean, Duchy of Cornwall

Report No: 19-267/DofC/Veronica Lodge, St Marys, I of S_Further Bats

Document approved by: Adrian Spalding PhD Director

Signature: 

Date: 23rd October 2020



Spalding Associates
(Environmental) Ltd



1. SUMMARY

Spalding Associates (Environmental) Ltd were instructed by Mr Nathan Dean, of the Duchy of Cornwall, to carry out a visual survey and a pair of emergence surveys on a property known as Veronica Lodge, Garrison Walk, Hugh Town, Isles of Scilly. The proposal is to extensively renovate the property including replacing the roof.

This survey work follows on from a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment carried out in late August 2020 by Darren Mason. The report assessed the building as having moderate roost potential for bats for the main building and low roost potential for the outbuildings and recommended that one dusk emergence survey and a separate dawn re-entry survey be carried out within the bat active season between May and September.

We were asked to re-assess the building and undertaken the further survey work recommended. Usually the further survey work would involve undertaking two dusk emergence surveys or dawn re-entry surveys between two and four weeks apart with one survey being undertaken before the end of August (the end of the peak activity season). However, we were only asked to undertake this survey work at the end of September, so the two surveys were undertaken closer together but not within one 24-hour period. This is not considered to be a significant limitation as the survey guidelines apply to the whole of the UK as this site is in the far west of the country, where the conditions stay warm, settled and dry much later in the year extending the active season. Also, on the Isles of Scilly bats are known to stay in the same roosts all year around. A visual assessment was undertaken, including an internal inspection, followed by a single emergence survey and single dawn re-entry survey using two surveyors covering the lodge and outbuildings.

No bats were seen to emerge from or enter Veronica Lodge or the outbuildings during the survey work undertaken and the buildings were only felt to have very limited potential during the visual survey. As a result, it can be confidently concluded that there is no evidence these buildings are used by roosting bats. As no evidence of the use of this building by roosting bats was found, no further work is necessary and the proposed works can proceed with a low to 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 an individual bat was to be found unexpectedly whilst the works are being carried out, work should stop immediately and Natural England or Spalding Associates informed. Any bats found should be protected from the elements and predators (particularly cats) and work activity should be removed to another area until Natural England or Spalding Associates can deal with the situation.

As no evidence of the use of this building by roosting bats was found, no mitigation is required. However, features allowing bats to gain access to the roof void or eaves could be incorporated if there was a desire to improve the biodiversity value of the site with regards to bats. If this were to be done only Bitumen Type 1F roofing felt should be used in areas bats could gain access to as modern breathable roosting membranes have been found to cause bat fatalities.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Spalding Associates (Environmental) Ltd were instructed by Mr Nathan Dean, of the Duchy of Cornwall, to carry out a visual survey and a pair of emergence surveys on a property known as Veronica Lodge, Garrison Walk, Hugh Town, Isles of Scilly. The proposal is to extensively renovate the property including replacing the roof.

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A visual assessment was undertaken, including an internal inspection, followed by a single emergence survey and single dawn re-entry survey using two surveyors covering the lodge and outbuildings.

3. METHODS

3.1. Visual survey

With the aid of a high-power torch and ladders the house and outbuildings were carefully searched, both internally and externally where access allowed, for bats or any signs of bat presence either in the past or present. This included searching for individual bats, droppings, feeding remains as well as searching for potential entry points, polishing or scratching of woodwork (indicating heavy-use by bats) and for cavities capable of providing roosting space for bats.

All surfaces were examined for bat droppings and feeding evidence, both internally and externally where access allowed, as well as ledges, hanging tiles and other protruding features. Any cavities and open areas were searched with a torch for roosting bats, as were any cavities present along the wall tops, between the roof timbers and walls and around any openings.

As bats can leave little evidence of their occupation, this survey also included an assessment of the potential for the buildings and features on the buildings to support roosting bats.

This survey was carried out shortly before the emergence survey on 26th September 2020.

3.2. Emergence/dawn re-entry survey

Emergence surveys aim to establish if the building being surveyed is used by day roosting bats and if so, to establish the levels of use, confirm the species present, identify the number of individuals present and identify the access points. In this instance a single emergence survey and single dawn re-entry survey using two trained surveyors was carried out more than 24 hours apart.

An emergence/dawn re-entry survey involves positioning surveyors (who are all experienced with the use of bat detectors) around the outside of a building previously identified as having the potential to support roosting bats. These surveyors observe the roof line, openings or any features identified as having the potential to support roosting bats. Observations for emerging bats begin a quarter of an hour before sunset and end at least one hour afterwards and for returning bats begins one and a half hours before sunrise and ends a quarter of an hour afterwards. The surveys were carried out under favourable weather conditions (no precipitation and not during strong winds) and in temperatures above 9 C.

1st survey, Emergence survey

On 26th September 2020, Simon Barnard and Matthew Thurlow were positioned on opposite corners of the house so that all aspects could be watched with the surveyor to the rear also having a good view of the outbuildings. The survey was carried out during suitable weather conditions for bat activity; i.e. Clear and dry with a moderate breeze, 60% cloud cover and a starting temperature of 14°C dropping down to 13°C by the end of the survey. The survey started at 18.57 and continued until 20.13 with sunset being at 19.13.

Bat activity was monitored using an Elekon Batlogger M detector and an AnabatTM Scout.

2nd survey, Dawn re-entry survey

On 28th September 2020, Simon Barnard and Mathew Thurlow were positioned on opposite corners of the house so that all aspects could be watched with the surveyor to the rear also having a good view of the outbuildings. The survey was carried out during suitable weather conditions for bat activity; i.e. Overcast but still, calm and dry with 100% light cloud cover and a temperature of 14°C. The survey started at 05.50 and continued until 07.35 with sunrise being at 07.20.

Bat activity was monitored using an Elekon Batlogger M detector and an AnabatTM Scout.

3.3. Surveyors

3.3.1. Simon Barnard

Simon Barnard is an experienced bat surveyor with more than 12 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 full range of species of bats found in Cornwall and is a registered consultant on Natural England's Bat Mitigation Class licence.

3.3.2. Matthew Thurlow

Matthew Thurlow is a trained and experienced bat surveyor experienced with the use of bat detectors and undertaking activity surveys and emergence surveys and is training towards his survey licences.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Building description

Veronica Lodge is a rectangular two storey house built from stone which has been rendered with hipped slate covered roof built in the 1790's for the Commanding Officer of The Garrison. To the rear is a small courtyard with two stone outbuildings built into a terrace in the hillside with a stone set of steps between them leaning up to the terrace above. To the front of the building is a glazed porch with a flat roof and to the rear is another small porch, see photos 1, 2, 3 and 4.



Photo 1. Showing the front of the house from the south east



Photo 2. Showing the rear of the house from the west



Photos 3 and 4. Showing the outbuildings located to the rear of the house

There is a single roof void over the house with two chimneys passing up through it and the roof has a fairly shallow pitch with a small section of ridge in the centre. The roof is supported by timber trusses, making it fairly open, and the underside of the roof is lined in places with lime render, see photos 5 and 6.



Photos 5 and 6. Showing the interior of the roof void over the house

Externally the building is fairly well sealed with the walls being solid render. The roof covering comes down beyond the eaves over an intergraded cast iron gutter, which appears from the ground to form part of the soffit. Also, the chimney flashings and ridge tiles appear to be well sealed. There are small gaps at a number of locations between the guttering and wall top which offer limited roosting potential for single bats but these are likely to become very warm in the summer as the guttering is painted black and made from cast iron. The junction between the slates and wall tops also appears to be fairly well sealed, when inspected from the ground with binoculars and a high-power torch. There are small sections of slightly lifted slates but these do not appear to extend to create cavities.

The porch to the front of the house is well glazed with a flat roof which is well sealed and contains no significant voids or cavities. The porch on the rear of the house has solid walls but there are gaps behind the fascias but these are all covered with reasonably heavy cobwebs.

The southern outbuilding to the rear of the house is a fairly narrow building with white painted stone walls and an unlined slate covered roof. Internally it is a single dark, cold and damp room accessed by a timber door, there are a small number of lifted slates but these do not appear to extend to create cavities in which bats are likely to roost.

The northern outbuilding is larger, it is also built from stone and is roofed with corrugated cement fibre sheeting. It is divided into two rooms internally, which are fairly light due to windows and roof lights, the southern one being smaller and containing a sink and a fridge and the northern one being open. Within this building the underside of the rafters supporting the roof are lined with plasterboard creating a small enclosed area, see photo 7. This building also appears damp.



Photo 7. Showing the interior of the northern room within the northern outbuilding

4.2. Surrounding landscape

Veronica Lodge is located on the western side of the Garrison looking out to the east over Hugh Town over St Mary's. It forms one of a line of houses and detached buildings extending to the north and south looking out over Hugh Town with open grassland, lines of trees and areas of scrub to the west and south forming the Garrison. The surrounding landscape represent good potential bat foraging habitat and there are known to be roosts used by Common Pipistrelles nearby but not within this building.

4.3. Visual survey

4.3.1. Bats

During the visual survey no evidence of the use of occupation by this building by roosting bats was found. Externally, a small number of features with some limited potential to support single roosting bats were identified but these were mostly inspected from the ground or ladders and ruled out.

4.4. Emergence/dawn re-entry survey

Emergence survey, 26th September 2020

The first bat activity noted was a pass by a Common Pipistrelle at 19.39 which flew into the site from the south east (from the direction of a known roost) and across the north side of the building. Several further passes were noted by a single bat feeding to the west of the house during the remainder of the survey.

No bats were seen to emerge from Veronica Lodge or the outbuildings during this survey.

Dawn re-entry survey, 28th September 2020

First bat activity noted was a pass by a Common Pipistrelle at 06.33 from 1 or 2 bats feeding to the west of the building. Activity by small numbers of Common Pipistrelles continued until 06.47 when a single bat was seen to fly around the northern side of the building and fly off to the south east after which no further activity was noted.

No bats were seen to enter features on Veronica Lodge or the outbuildings during this survey.

4.5. Summary

No bats were seen to emerge from or enter Veronica Lodge or the outbuildings during these surveys and the buildings were only felt to have very limited potential during the visual survey. As a result, it can be confidently concluded that there is no evidence these buildings are used by roosting bats.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposal is to extensively renovate the property including replacing the roof.

No bats were seen to emerge from or enter Veronica Lodge or the outbuildings during the survey work undertaken and the buildings were only felt to have very limited potential during the visual survey. As a result, it can be confidently concluded that there is no evidence these buildings are used by roosting bats. As no evidence of the use of this building by roosting bats was found, no further work is necessary and the proposed works can proceed with a low to negligible risk of disturbing/harming roosting bats or damaging or destroying a bat roost.

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6. LEGISLATION

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
- Posses, 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 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.