



Donald Thomas Centre,
Camborne, Cornwall

Bat and Nesting Bird Visual Survey
Preliminary Roost Inspection

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is proposed to remove and replace the existing ceiling at The Donald Thomas Centre, 19 Chapel Street, Camborne, Cornwall, TR14 8EG. The works may also include some roof repairs. The OS Grid reference of the site is SW 64687 40055.

Bright Environment Ltd was commissioned by Donald Thomas Centre in July 2025 to carry out a visual bat and nesting bird survey (preliminary roost inspection) to inform the works. Bats and nesting birds are legally protected (see Appendix 1).

2. METHODOLOGY

The surveys were carried out following the guidance given in 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines' (Collins, 2023) and Barn owl survey methodology and techniques for use in ecological assessment (Shawyer, 2011). Impact assessment and mitigation follows the guidance provided by CIEEM (2022) and the 'UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines' (Reason & Wray, 2023).

2.1 Visual survey methodology

A visual survey of the building was carried out on 15th July 2025. During this the suitability of the building and surrounding habitats to support bats and nesting birds was assessed.

A detailed search of the interior and exterior of the building was carried out using a high powered torch to illuminate all areas thought suitable for bats and nesting birds. Any accessible cracks and crevices were investigated with the use of a torch and endoscope. The survey area is defined in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Survey area.

The survey involved looking for bats and nesting birds and for evidence of their use, including droppings, pellets, staining, liming, feathers and feeding remains. Survey details are shown in Table 1.

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, 2023) 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.

Table 1 Survey details.

Date	Type of survey	Personnel - bat licence number	Weather conditions
15.7.25	Visual survey	Oscar Bright 2025-12599-CL17-BAT	Dry, breezy, overcast. Temp 17C

3. SURVEY RESULTS

3.1 Habitat description

The Donald Thomas Centre is located in the centre of Camborne town. It is an urban environment with few opportunities for foraging bats. There are trees 150m away but these have poor ecological connectivity with the building.

The building is Grade II listed. The oldest part was built in 1839 as a Methodist chapel and later expanded into a literary institute. In the 1970s it was taken over by the Camborne Community Centre Trust and opened it as a day centre for older people. Today it is used as a contemporary craft hub.

The building is single storey throughout and mostly constructed of stone; although the flat roof extension on the south elevation is rendered concrete block. The main hall (area subject to survey) has a high ceiling with one large roof void above. The roof is hipped and the covering is natural slate with clay ridge tiles. This section is partly rendered and partly stone. There are wooden facias on all elevations of the main hall. The main hall is flanked by side wings and there is a large extension to the west which currently houses the art room and equipment.



Photograph 1. East elevations.



Photograph 2. North and west elevations.



Photograph 3. South and west elevations.



Photograph 4. Ceiling.

3.2 Visual bat survey results

No evidence of bats was found within the roof void.

A search around the outside of the building found it to be largely tightly sealed with the exception of the facias on the south and west elevations which have large gaps due to the stonework on which they are fitted. It was possible to thoroughly search wall tops around these gaps and no evidence was found.

The bitumen roof membrane was in poor repair so could be thoroughly internally searched. There were no cavities within the walls which could allow bats to roost unseen.

The building has been assessed as having negligible potential as a bat roost.



Photograph 5. Tight facias.



Photograph 6. Gappy facias.

3.3 Nesting bird survey results

Evidence of nesting birds was found during the survey in the form of two active birds nest in the roof void. One of which was located on the northwest corner of the building and the other on the southwest corner.

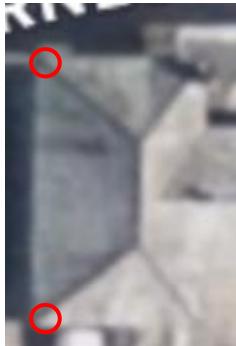


Figure 2. Locations of active nests.



Photographs 7 & 8. Birds nests.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

No evidence of bats was found, and it is considered unlikely that any evidence was overlooked. It was possible to carry out a thorough search of all potential bat roost areas. The building has been assessed as having negligible potential as a bat roost. No further surveys for bats are required.

In the unlikely event that bats are discovered during the works, they must not be handled, and works must stop immediately, and advice sought from Bright Environment Ltd (Tel 07974 204078) or Natural (Tel 0300 060 3900).

Evidence of nesting birds was found in the form of two nests in the roof void. It is possible that birds could nest before the works commence. The nests and eggs of all wild birds are protected against taking, damage or destruction under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. If the works are to be carried out within the bird breeding season (March to September) the building should be searched for nesting birds. If nesting birds are present, works should not commence until dependant young have fledged. Further advice can be sought from Bright Environment Ltd (Tel 07974 204078) or Natural England (Tel 0300 0602544).

As ecological features can change over time it is recommended that this report is valid until July 2026.

5. REFERENCES

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Appendix 1 Summary of relevant legislation and policies

Bats

All species of bat, their breeding sites and their resting place in England and Wales are protected through a 'dual' system of protection, under the England and Wales Habitats Regulations and W&CA. Because two regimes give legal protection to bats, the implications of both regimes must be fully understood.

Regulation (Reg.) 43 of the England and Wales Habitats Regulations makes it an offence to:

- deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- deliberately disturb bats (which includes any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate or to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong);
- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat; or
- possess, control, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange, any live or dead bat or part of a bat or anything derived from a bat or any part of a bat.

Under Section 9 of the W&CA (s.9(4)(b), 9(4)(c) and 9(5) only), it is an offence (in relation to bats) to:

- intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place of shelter or protection;
- intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place used by a bat for shelter or protection;
- or
- sell, offer or expose for sale, or have in their possession or transports for the purpose of sale, any live or dead bat or any part of, or anything derived from a bat (or be responsible for adverts suggesting the intention to do this).

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (HM Government, 2006) confers a legal duty on every public authority to conserve biodiversity under Section 40(1). Section 41 required the publication of lists of habitats and species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. This list contains the habitats and species previously known as UK BAP priorities for conservation, and the terminology of habitats and species of principal importance supersedes the UK BAP terminology. Such features will be referred to as Habitats of Principal Importance (HPIs) and Species of Principal Importance (SPIs), throughout this report. Barbastelle, Bechstein's, noctule, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, greater horseshoe and lesser horseshoe bats are SPIs.

Barn owls and other nesting birds

The nests and eggs of all wild birds are protected against taking, damage and destruction under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Barn owls are given greater protection against disturbance while breeding under Schedule 1 of the Act.

Planning Policy

National planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023). Chapter 15 relates to conserving and enhancing the natural environment. The most relevant policies relating to planning decisions are (summarised):

- Recognising the wider benefits of natural capital and ecosystem services.
- Minimising impacts to and providing net gains in biodiversity.
- By ensuring that new development is appropriate for its location, and that the potential sensitivity of the site is taken into account, planning decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

The Cornwall Local Plan (2016) sets out policies relating to the natural environment.

Policy 22 sets out the mitigation requirements for developments which may result in increased recreational impacts from development.

Policy 23 relates to all aspects of the natural environment, section 3 of this policy relates specifically to biodiversity and geodiversity. The policy sets out that developments should conserve, protect, and where possible, enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, giving appropriate weight to their level of importance.

Opportunities should be sought within developments, to create networks of wildlife corridors linking County Wildlife Sites and other areas of biodiversity importance, helping to deliver the Cornwall Biodiversity Action Plan's actions.

Proposals should avoid impacts to designated sites, protected species or species/ habitats of principal importance, and any proposals where such impacts cannot be avoided will only be permitted where suitable mitigation/ compensation can be provided, and if the tests of the relevant legislation are met.

The mitigation hierarchy should be applied, such that attempts are first made to avoid impacts, and to enable net gains. Where impacts are unavoidable, they must be adequately and proportionately mitigation. Compensation would be required, as a final resort, if full mitigation cannot be provided.

Other Legislation

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (HM Government, 1981, as amended) is the main piece of legislation relating to nature conservation in Great Britain. It transposes into British law the Berne, Bonn and RAMSAR Conventions, and the European 'Birds Directive' (CEC, 1979). This legislation covers protection of wildlife (birds, other animals and plants), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) (with some SSSI's also designated as Special Protection Areas, SPA's), National Nature Reserves (NNR's) and RAMSAR sites.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (HM Government, 2010) transposes into British law the European 'Habitats Directive' (CEC, 1992), and covers Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) and European Protected Species (EPS) (see below). It also provides further protection for SPA's and RAMSAR sites.

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act (HM Government, 2000) increases protection for SSSIs and threatened species. It specifies the duty of Local Authorities to further the conservation of listed (UK BAP priority) habitats and species.

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The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 protects historically / ecologically important hedgerows.

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 provides specific protection for badgers.