

CAPABILITY STATEMENT



Built Heritage and the Historic Landscape

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Overview

BSG Ecology provides ecological support to a wide range of projects involving the maintenance and restoration of historic structures and historic landscapes.

We support private and public projects, including Heritage Lottery Funded projects, at all stages. This requires a thorough appreciation of the obligations placed on the custodians of our heritage assets. BSG Ecology are Welsh Government Framework Ecologists for the provision of ecological advice to Cadw, and for many years we have also provided biodiversity advice on heritage projects to National Trust, English Heritage, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and many local authorities.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments, listed buildings and landscapes, historic parks and other heritage assets have legislation and planning policies that limit how they can be treated, and the funding streams for essential work to many of these assets is often time-limited, which can pose significant challenges when considering ecological issues. We provide advice to developers working within Conservation Areas and on Listed Buildings and work closely with architects, building engineers, funding organisations, building custodians and project managers.

Often, heritage projects involve work with the potential to affect protected species, particularly bats. BSG Ecology has one of the UK's most experienced teams in bat survey, mitigation, licensing and assessment. This includes projects involving many of the UK's rarest bats including Bechstein's bat, barbastelle and horseshoe bats.

Ecology Survey Capability

BSG Ecology provides the following consultancy services that are of particular relevance to the heritage sector:

- Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and tailored ecology walkover survey to identify priority habitats, constraints and opportunities for restoration of ecological features;
- Inspections for signs of bats and activity and hibernation surveys where necessary;
- Thermal imaging surveys: bats and nesting birds can often be difficult to pinpoint without extensive or repeat manual bat detector surveys. We have invested in thermal imaging equipment that can identify the heat given off by animals at rest;

- Barn owl surveys: barn owls often nest and roost in historic structures (in particular), and our staff includes licenced surveyors;
- Rare plant surveys: because historic structures and landscapes have been around for a long time they can support rare and protected plants such as, in south-east Wales, a rare sub-species of fern known as lobed maidenhair spleenwort. These need to be carefully taken into account when planning work;
- Invertebrate surveys: we have a full range of in-house specialists including qualified entomologists;
- Freshwater surveys to assess water quality and identify issues;
- Our survey data is presented where appropriate using GIS meaning that we are able to provide data in GIS format for integration into our client's own GIS databases.

Ecology Consultancy Services

BSG Ecology provides whole project support from conception through to implementing ecology mitigation works or acting as ecological agents for the local authority.

Stakeholder engagement is often a critical element of heritage projects: often local Friends Groups and other interest groups can be concerned about changes to their area. Staff at BSG Ecology have supported many formal and informal stakeholder consultation events. We also use a range of mediums to ensure clear communication and positive engagement. We recognize the importance of engaging staff and the general public with the ecology assets of a site, and seek where appropriate to support wider involvement with ecology.

BSG Ecology also frequently provides the following services and outputs in relation to heritage projects:

- Provision of training on ecology issues for those involved in day-to-day management of sites;
- Provision of advice on licensing and mitigation for protected species;
- Ecology input to Conservation Management Plans (CMP);
- Provision of Habitat Management Plans and advice.