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GROUND-LEVEL TREE ASSESSMENT (GLTA)

TREE ADJACENT TO LONGSTONE BUNGALOW, ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY



Client: Sian Scott

Our reference: 2021/04

Planning reference: N/A

Report date: 17th September 2021

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Executive Summary

Bats – Results and Findings

The ground-level tree assessment (GLTA) survey concluded that there was **negligible potential** for the use of the pine tree by roosting bats.

This judgement was reached in accordance with the survey methodologies and evaluation criteria outlined in the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 3rd edition¹ and Bat Roosts in Trees²

Bats – Further Survey Requirements

No further surveys are recommended with regards to this tree – the GLTA conclusion does not require further survey information with regards to bats in order to inform proposed tree works.

Note that if the condition of the tree changes significantly between the time of writing and the time of proposed tree works, including damage, tree surgery work, disease or other factors affecting the potential of the tree to support roosting bats, then further surveys may be required to ensure legislative compliance.

Bats – Recommendations

No further recommendations are provided with regards to roosting bats.

Nesting Birds – Results and Findings

The tree may provide suitable habitat for nesting birds during the breeding season.

Nesting Birds - Recommendations

In order to ensure legislative compliance, the contractors undertaking tree works must ensure that nesting birds are not disturbed in accordance with requirements under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981)³. Observation of the recommendations provided in Appendix 2 will ensure this.

It is the responsibility of the contractors undertaking the works to ensure legislative compliance with regards to nesting birds – it is not recommended that Planning Conditions or other mechanisms are required to support this.

Replacement nest boxes are recommended to provide enhancement.

Other Ecological Receptors

No further ecological impacts relevant to planning are identified associated with the tree.

¹ Collins, J. (ed.) 2016 Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

² Bat Tree Habitat Key (2018) Bat Roosts in Trees. Pelagic Publishing, London.

³ HMSO (1981). Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). HMSO, London.

APPENDIX 1 – GROUND LEVEL TREE ASSESSMENT (GLTA)

The pine tree was assessed for its potential to support bat roosts at ground level using binoculars, during daylight hours on 14th September 2021. The survey was conducted by licensed bat worker James Faulconbridge.

The survey technique followed the guidelines set out in Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 3rd edition⁴ and Bat Roosts in Trees⁵. Table 01, below, was used to categorise the bat roosting potential of the tree with regards to potential roosting features (PRF's) present, such as cavities, woodpecker holes and cracks.

Table 01. Categories of Bat Roosting Potential (BRP) for trees in respect of their Potential Roosting Features (PRF)

Suitability	Description
Negligible	Negligible PRFs likely to be used by roosting bats.
Low	A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only limited roosting potential.
Moderate	A tree with one or more PRF's that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only).
High	A tree with one or more PRF's that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.
Confirmed	Direct ^a evidence of bat presence such as droppings, bats in situ, or emergence/re-entry from activity surveys.

^a Direct evidence of bat occupation includes identification of droppings or bats in situ.

The survey identified **negligible potential** for use of the pine tree by roosting bats. Details are provided in Table 02. No further recommendations are provided with regard to these species.

The tree may provide **suitable habitat for nesting birds** during the breeding season. The methodology outlined in Appendix 2 should be followed to ensure legislative compliance.

⁴ Collins, J. (ed.) 2016 Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

⁵ Bat Tree Habitat Key (2018) Bat Roosts in Trees. Pelagic Publishing, London.

Table 02. GLTA Results

Species	Monterey Pine
Location (Easting/Northing)	91767 (E), 11245 (W)
Age Class	Semi-mature, pollarded at around 2m.
Height	15m (approximate)
Diameter at Breast Height (DBH)	1m (measurement taken just below first leader)
Potential Roosting Features	PRF1 - Two minor cavities in south-facing pruning cuts at around 2/2.5m – both were inspected directly & found to be unsuitable for use by roosting bats. Negligible Potential.
	PRF2 - An included union in the main stem was filled with debris and leaf litter – this feature is likely to be damp and exposed providing no suitable roosting opportunities for bats. Negligible Potential.
	PRF3 - Minor wounds identified in the upper canopy were fully inspected with binoculars and found to offer no cavities or other roosting opportunities. Negligible Potential.
	PRF4 - The bark on the main stem up to 2m had occasional gaps but these did not appear to offer the niches or cavities required for use by roosting bats. Negligible Potential.
Assessment (bats)	The tree overall provides negligible potential for use by roosting bats.
Assessment (birds)	No evidence of nesting birds was noted at the time of survey; however the tree would provide suitable nesting habitat for common bird species during the breeding season.

APPENDIX 2

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METHOD STATEMENT WITH REGARDS TO BREEDING BIRDS

Timing of Works

The most reliable means of ensuring nesting birds are not impacted by the works is for tree works to be conducted outside the bird breeding season of March to September inclusive. Tree works can be undertaken outside of the breeding season, March to September inclusive, without constraint.

Works Undertaken during the Breeding Season

If tree works proceed during the breeding season, a nesting bird survey would need to be carried out by a suitably qualified person prior to works commencing. Nests are only protected if they are active (i.e. being used to rear young) or in the process of being built.

- Where active nests are identified, works affecting these must be delayed until the chicks have fledged the nest.
- Once it is confirmed that nests are absent or no longer active, the relevant features should be dismantled carefully and by hand as a precaution.

Enhancements

There is no requirement to mitigate for loss of nesting habitat for breeding birds as no nests were identified; however if the applicant wished to provide biodiversity enhancement measures, this could be achieved through the erection of bird boxes on the new structure or within the garden.

House sparrows nest communally and nest boxes could accommodate this, either through the installation of a single purpose-built nest box comprising several individual chambers with separate entrances, or the installation of 3+ nest boxes in close proximity. Nest boxes suitable for hole-dwelling species such as blue tits, or open-fronted boxes for species such as blackbird and robin also have a high likelihood of occupation.

Boxes should be mounted on a wall or tree if possible, at a height of at least 3m above the ground with an entrance clear of vegetation/other features which may put them at risk of predation from cats.

Boxes can be sourced online, or can be constructed on site using methodology and specifications provided by the RSPB:

Sparrows: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/give-nature-a-home-in-your-garden/garden-activities/createasparrowstreet/>

Other Species: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-families/family-wild-challenge/activities/build-a-birdbox/>

APPENDIX 3

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PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph 1: One of the cracks in the pruning cuts on the southern aspect (PRF1)



Photograph 2: Showing the union feature filled with debris. (PRF2)



Photograph 3: Example of well-healed wounds in the upper canopy (PRF3)



Photograph 4: Example of lifted bark which appears too tight or exposed for use by roosting bats (PRF4)