

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

1 BUZZA STREET
HUGH TOWN, ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY



Client: James Cons

Our reference: 2021/03

Planning reference: Produced in advance of submission

Report date: 17th September 2021

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Executive Summary

Bats - Results and Findings

The preliminary roost assessment (PRA) survey concluded that there was **negligible potential** for use of the western pitched roofs of 1 and 2 Buzza Street by bats. This assessment relates solely to the western pitch of the roof. It does not provide a comprehensive assessment of the buildings in question.

It is noted that one adjacent feature, the hanging tiles on the dormer of 2 Buzza Street, provides **low potential** roosting features for individual bats. This feature would not be directly impacted by the proposed replacement works but is included in this assessment as measures would be required to ensure there is no disturbance or accidental damage during roof replacement.

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

Bats - Further Survey Requirements

No further surveys are recommended – the PRA conclusion does not require further survey information with regards to bats in order to inform a planning application.

Bats - Recommendations

It is not recommended that any Planning Conditions are required with regards to bats in relation to the proposed roof replacement works assessed in this report.

Standard good practice and vigilance should be observed by the contractors undertaking the replacement works in acknowledgement that bats are transient in their use of roosting opportunities and may explore potential locations. This includes measures to avoid disturbance or accidental damage to the hanging tiles of the dormer of 2 Buzza Street. Recommendations to ensure legislative compliance are provided in Appendix 2.

Nesting Birds - Results and Findings

The survey did not identify any suitable nesting habitat for breeding birds associated with the western pitch of the roof or adjacent structural features.

Nesting Birds - Recommendations

There is no requirement to replace nesting habitat for breeding birds as no suitable features are identified in the western pitch of the roof or adjacent structural features.

Other Ecological Receptors

No further ecological impacts relevant to planning are identified.

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

APPENDIX 1 – PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

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| Planning Authority: Isles of Scilly | Location: 90500(E) 10472 (N) | Planning Application ref: Report produced in support of application |
| Planning application address: 1 Buzza Street, Hugh Town, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly | | |
| Proposed development: The proposed works were identified by the client and accord with the documentation submitted in support of the application. These involve: 1) The removal and replacement of the western pitch of the roof including the entire span of 1 Buzza Street and the northernmost portion of 2 Buzza Street terminating at the dormer. | | |
| Building references: The roof section in question is identified in the plans provided in Appendix 3. | | |
| Name and licence number of bat-workers carrying out survey: James Faulconbridge (2015-12724-CLS-CLS) | | |
| Preliminary Roost Assessment date: The visual inspection was undertaken on 14 th September 2021 in accordance with relevant Best Practice methodology ² . | | |
| Local and Landscape Setting: The property is situated within the residential area of Hugh Town in St Mary's in the Isles of Scilly. The land use immediately surrounding the property comprises dense residential development with small gardens. The shoreline of Porthcressa Beach lies close to the south of the property with the green space of the allotments, playground and setting of Buzza Tower close by to the east. Three records of common pipistrelle roosts are identified in relatively close proximity to the property – these relate to individual bats utilising features such as hanging slates around dormer windows. | | |
| Building Description(s): The property of 1 Buzza Street is an end-of terrace cottage of granite construction with a hipped, slate-tiled roof. The property has single-story flat-roof extensions to the north and east – due to the nature of the proposed works, these were not considered further as part of the current assessment. This assessment also includes consideration of the adjacent property 2 Buzza Street which is attached on the southern aspect and represents one of several mid-row terrace properties. | | |

² Collins, J. (ed.) 2016 Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

The exterior facades of both properties are in good condition – 1 Buzza Street has exposed granite blocks with well-maintained pointing; 2 Buzza Street is rendered with the covering in good condition.

The boxed eaves on the western aspect of both properties are in good condition and tightly sealed. Guttering runs below the eaves of the tiled roof.

The tiled roof was evidently tightly sealed prior to the slippage which necessitated the current roof replacement works. Small, well-fitted slate tiles with gaps sealed by cement pointing comprise the western pitch offering no opportunities for access by bats aside from the location of the slippage itself. The tiles on the ridge and hip are well fitted and sealed, as are the chimneys. Prior to the slippage, it is considered highly unlikely that bats would be able to gain access beneath tiles or into the roof.

The upper roof space of both properties has been converted to residential use with no loft space present. In each property, the lower pitches of the roof are boxed for cupboard storage – these are fully boarded out in the case of 1 Buzza Street whilst the underside of the tiles are directly visible from the cupboard in 2 Buzza Street. This latter location allowed for an inspection of the tiles from beneath, confirming that the only light visible from within is associated with the slipped tiles identifying this as the only potential access location.

The only potential access points or roosting opportunities for bats are associated with the location where the tiles have slipped. These remain tight and, though not water-resistant, they are still in good enough condition that they offer very little scope for access by roosting bats. Whilst it cannot be ruled out, it is considered unlikely that this low-suitability feature which arose during Storm Evert in July 2021 would be occupied by roosting bats in the short term.

The roof replacement works would extend as far as the dormer window of 2 Buzza Street – this structure was inspected from the dormer itself. The vertical hanging tiles associated with this dormer are well-fitted though minor gaps do occur in places and roosting bats have been identified associated with similar features in the vicinity of the property. Like-for-like roof replacement works running up to this feature should not impact upon these potential features either at the time of replacement or post-completion, however care would be required to ensure that the hanging tiles are not impacted during roof replacement works.

No evidence of current or historic use by bats or nesting birds was identified during the survey.

Survey Limitations

It was not possible to inspect the underside of the roof tiles within either property as the roof space was converted to residential use with no loft spaces or other voids; however this is taken into account in the assessment and does not affect the conclusions which are based primarily on the lack of potential access points for bats as identified by external inspection.

Assessment of Potential for use by Roosting Bats

It is considered that the western pitch of the roof provides **negligible potential** for use by roosting bats.

The dormer of 2 Buzza Street – an adjacent structure – could potentially support individual common pipistrelle bats though this is considered to be **low potential**.

Recommendations and Justification (Bats):

No further surveys are recommended – the conclusion of **negligible potential** does not require any further information with regards to bats in order to inform a planning application.

It is not recommended that any Planning Conditions are required with regards to bats in relation to the proposed roof replacement works.

Standard good practice and vigilance should be observed by the contractors undertaking the replacement works in acknowledgement that bats are transient in their use of roosting opportunities and may explore potential locations. The potential for individual common pipistrelle bats to make use of minor features in the adjacent dormer of 2 Buzza Street means that this feature must not be impacted during works. This would require due care to avoid disturbance or accidental damage. Recommendations to ensure legislative compliance are provided in Appendix 2.

Assessment of Potential for use by Nesting Birds

It is considered that the western pitch of the roof and adjacent structural features provide **negligible potential** for use by nesting birds.

Recommendations and Justification (Birds):

There is no requirement to mitigate for loss of nesting habitat for breeding birds.

Signed by bat worker(s):

Date: 17th September 2021



APPENDIX 2

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PRECAUTIONARY METHOD STATEMENT WITH REGARDS TO BATS

The purpose of this Method Statement is to ensure that roof replacement works can proceed where presence of bats has been determined to be unlikely, but a precautionary approach is still advisable. It has been determined that direct harm to roosting bats during the proposed replacement works would be highly unlikely.

Contractors should, however, be aware of **their own legal responsibility with respect to bats**:

Relevant Legislation regarding Bats

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, or the 'Habitat Regulations 2017', transposes European Directives into English and Welsh legislation. Under these regulations, bats are classed as a European Protected Species and it is, therefore, an offence to:

- *Deliberately kill, injure or capture bats;*
- *Deliberately damage or destroy bat roosts.*

A bat roost is commonly defined as being any structure or place that is used as a breeding site or resting place, and since it may be in use only occasionally or at specific times of year, a roost retains such a designation even if bats are not present.

Bats are also protected from disturbance under Regulation 43. Disturbance of bats includes in particular any disturbance which is likely:

- (a) *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*
- (b) *To affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.*

Bats also have limited protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 (as amended). It is, therefore, an offence to:

- *Intentionally or recklessly destroy, damage or obstruct any structure or place which a bat uses for shelter or protection.*
- *Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats whilst occupying any structure or place used for shelter or protection.*

Contractors should be aware of **where bats are most likely to be found in respect to the roof to be replaced:**

There is a negligible risk of bats making transient use of minor cavities created by the slippage of the tiles which have necessitated the replacement works.

The tiles around the area where the slippage occurred should be removed carefully in such a way that in the highly unlikely event of a bat being present beneath, they are not crushed by the removal of the tile.

Contractors should be aware of **where bats could occur in structures adjacent to the works site.**

There is low potential for individual bats to use transient roosting opportunities beneath minor gaps in tiles around the dormer of 2 Buzza Street.

The roof replacement works can approach, but must not impact upon, this feature in order for the assessment and working methodology outlined in this report to be valid.

Care should be taken during works to ensure that this structure is not disturbed or damaged. This may include a contractor briefing to ensure that those working on the roof understand the requirement, or other measures such as a temporary sign, tape or physical barrier if deemed necessary.

Contractors should be aware of **the process to follow in the highly unlikely event of finding bats** or evidence indicating that bats are likely to be present:

If bats are identified, works should cease and the named ecologist contacted immediately for advice.

If the bat is in a safe situation, or a situation which can be made safe, they should remain undisturbed.

Only if the bat is in immediate risk of harm can the bat be moved with care and using a gloved hand. This is a last resort and should only be undertaken for humane reasons if the bat is at immediate risk of harm **and** if the ecologist cannot be contacted for advice.

APPENDIX 3

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LOCATION PLAN AND PHOTOGRAPHS



Map 01 – Illustrating location of property within the local environs (red circle). Reproduced in accordance with Google’s Fair Use Policy.



Map 02 – Showing the roof to be replaced (blue) which includes the western pitch of 1 Buzza Street and a portion of the neighbouring terraced property to the south – 2 Buzza Street. The footprint of the property 1 Buzza Street is indicated with the red line for reference.



Photograph 1: Showing the western aspect of 1 and 2 Buzza Street. The granite blockwork of 1 Buzza Street and the rendered façade of 2 Buzza Street distinguish the two properties.



Photograph 2: Showing the underside of the boxed eaves illustrating the tight fitting and lack of access. The guttering attached to a fascia board can be seen to the left.



Photograph 3: Showing the area of the roof where the tiles have slipped.



Photograph 4: Showing the interior of the roof space at 1 Buzza Street where the residential conversion has occurred. The built-in storage close to eaves level can also be seen.



Photograph 5: Showing the tight cement pointing between slate tiles which characterises the roof



Photograph 6: Showing generally well-fitted hanging tiles of the dormer at 2 Buzza Street – minor cavities have low potential to support individual bats.