

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

TREBOETH. HUGH TOWN, ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY



Client: Sophie Stokes

Our reference: 22-5-1

Planning reference: Produced in advance of submission

Report date: 4th June 2022

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Executive Summary

Bats - Results and Findings

The preliminary roost assessment (PRA) survey concluded that the building has **negligible potential** for use of individual, discreet elements of the structure by bats. The remainder of the structure does not appear to offer suitable roosting opportunities for 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

Bats - Further Survey Requirements

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

Bats - Recommendations

Good practice and appropriate vigilance should be observed by the contractors undertaking the works in acknowledgement that bats are transient in their use of roosting opportunities and may explore potential locations.

If the proposed works will affect the minor features where discreet roosting potential is identified in this report, then it is recommended that a Planning Condition is attached to any Decision Notice, stipulating that the recommendations outlined in Appendix 2 of this report are followed during works. This should be a compliance condition only - it is not recommended that the Applicant should be required to submit further documentation or evidence to discharge this condition.

Nesting Birds - Results and Findings

The survey did not identify any suitable nesting habitat for breeding birds associated with the property in its current condition and ongoing occupation.

Nesting Birds - Recommendations

There is no requirement to replace nesting habitat for breeding birds as no suitable features are identified. However contractors undertaking the works should be aware of their own responsibilities with regards to nesting birds and exercise appropriate care and vigilance during any works affecting the building.

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)

Planning Authority: Isles of Scilly	Location: SV 90511 10450	Planning Application ref: Report produced in support of application
Planning application address: Treboeth, Hugh Town, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly		
Proposed development: The report is produced in advance of detailed proposals regarding the property and does not therefore provide a specific assessment of potential impacts arising from a specific proposal. It instead presents a comprehensive assessment of the property with regards to its potential to support roosting habitat for bats, and identifies areas of the structure where precautionary measures or further surveys would be required if they were to be affected.		
Building references: The different elements of the building complex, described separately where their structure varies, are 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 25 th May 2022 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 building comprises three distinct elements which are identified separately in Map 02. These are the three-storey house; the two-storey extension; and the single-storey outbuildings. At the western end of the site is the three-storey house with a pitched, slate-tiled roof. Attached to the eastern aspect of this is a predominantly flat-roofed two-storey element of the building, though there is a steep single-pitched section falling away from the flat-roof component at the		

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

north-eastern edge. Finally there are a series of single-storey outbuildings which follow the building line on the southern aspect and enclose an alleyway/courtyard between them and the main structures adjacent.

All of the buildings are rendered throughout and this is in excellent condition with no gaps, cracks or fissures which could represent roosting features in their own right, or provide access to further features in the main structure of the building behind. Doors and windows are uPVC and are well-fitted with no gaps noted around frames.

The main roof structure of the three-storey house comprises slate-tiles directly attached to battens with no underfelted. This is generally well-sealed though some gaps at the eaves would allow internal access to the loft space for bats. The A-frame timbers are tightly fitted and offer no gaps between them and adjoining timbers. There is a ridge beam which is predominantly well cemented into position though minor gaps do occur. The loft space contains a water tank, a television aerial and other pipework and electric cabling with insulation covering the floor throughout. The void was fully inspected and no droppings of bats or other species such as rodents were identified; nor was there any evidence of birds accessing the loft space. There are chimney stacks at either end of the roof – one of granite and one of brick construction. These were in good condition and did not appear to offer any roosting opportunities for bats. The terminal rafters are set far enough from the gable walls that they do not offer roosting crevices. Overall, the loft and roof structure offer free-hanging roosting opportunities internally; or potentially beneath minor gaps in the ridge tiles at the western edge of the roof – these tiles are otherwise well-fitted. Both of these potential features are considered to be of negligible potential.

The outbuildings are single-storey and rendered with single-pitch sloping roofs of corrugated sheet or fiberglass construction. There were open doors/windows facing the enclosed alleyway/courtyard allowing internal access and inspection of each; however these appeared to offer no internal or external niches suitable for use by roosting bats.

The flat-roof structure on the two-storey extension was well-sealed throughout and no roosting opportunities were noted. There are no lofts or other internal voids associated with this element of the building. A chimney present on the eastern edge of this roof joins with lead-flashing which appears to be well-fitted. A small inset porch on the western side of this element of the building is well-sealed and no potential features were noted. There is however a fascia board running around much of this building supporting guttering. Whilst generally well-fitted, there are gaps between the board and the wall on the south-eastern corner; and along much of the western aspect. No droppings or other signs of bat presence were noted on the white rendered walls beneath; though this feature does represent potential roosting opportunities for individual bats such as common pipistrelle. Fascia boards on the three-storey house and the single-storey outbuildings by contrast appear well-fitted throughout.

The three-storey house and two-storey extension are attached to the neighbouring property on the eastern aspect – the union is made with cement capping rather than flashing and this junction appears to be tightly sealed throughout.

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 western aspect of the building directly as the property is attached to the neighbouring buildings. However inspection was possible at a distance through binoculars and the combination of this inspection coupled with the style and construction of the buildings provides a high degree of confidence that no further roosting features were present.

The survey was undertaken during the main summer activity season when it is expected that any evidence pertaining to roosts of higher conservation significance such as maternity roosts

would be present. The timing of survey is not therefore considered a constraint or limitation.

Assessment of Potential for use by Roosting Bats

It is considered that the gaps beneath the ridge tiles on the three-storey building; and the gaps behind fascia boards on the two-storey building offer **negligible potential** for use by roosting bats. No other suitable features for use by roosting bats were identified.

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.

Good practice and vigilance should be observed by the contractors undertaking works if they affect the following elements of the structure:

- The ridge of the main three-storey building;
- The fascia boards on the two-storey building.

Recommendations to ensure legislative compliance are provided in Appendix 2. If a subsequent Planning Application includes proposals which would affect these structures, such as re-roofing, re-pointing or replacement of the fascia boards, then it is recommended that a Planning Condition is attached to any approval Decision Notice, stipulating that the recommendations outlined in Appendix 2 of this report are followed during works. This should be a compliance condition only - it is not recommended that the Applicant should be required to submit further documentation or evidence to discharge this condition.

Assessment of Potential for use by Nesting Birds

No evidence of nesting birds was noted during the survey and the building does not appear to offer suitable nesting habitats due to the condition and structure. There is therefore **negligible potential** for use by nesting birds.

Recommendations and Justification (Birds):

The risk of nesting birds being present is considered to be negligible; however it is the responsibility of the contractors undertaking the works to ensure legislative compliance with regards to nesting birds in accordance with requirements of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). This includes care and appropriate vigilance during works. It is not recommended that Planning Conditions or other mechanisms are required to support this.

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

Survey Validity and Update

The data supporting this PRA are considered to provide an appropriate baseline for a planning application submitted within 12 months from the date of survey.

It is recommended that if there are significant changes in building condition, or if a Planning Application is not submitted within this timeframe, then an updated walkover survey should be undertaken in order to identify any changes in the ecological assessment of the Site and update/amend the assessment accordingly.

Signed by bat worker(s):

Date: 4th June 2022



APPENDIX 2

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PRECAUTIONARY METHOD STATEMENT WITH REGARDS TO BATS

The purpose of this Method Statement is to ensure that works can proceed affecting elements of the building 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 renovation 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 of the building**:

There is a negligible risk of bats making transient use of the following features:

- Gaps beneath the ridge tiles on the three-storey house;
- Gaps behind the fascia boards where they occur on the two-storey extension.

If these elements of the building are affected by works, they should be removed carefully and by hand in such a manner that, in the unlikely event of a bat being present, they are exposed and identified without risk of crushing or otherwise harming the bat in the process.

Once these areas have been fully exposed, a careful inspection should be undertaken after which works can proceed without further constraint provided that no bats or evidence of bats are identified.

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 property including the main 3-storey structure (yellow), the flat-roof extension (red) and the outbuilding/enclosed alleyway (blue).



Photograph 1: Showing the western (front) and southern (side) aspects of the main three-storey building.



Photograph 2: Showing the southern aspect of the building complex including the single-storey outbuildings and the 2-storey flat-roof extension behind the main 3-storey house.



Photograph 3: Showing the alleyway on the southern aspect with the outbuildings to the left; the main 3-storey house ahead and centre; and the 2-storey flat-roof extension on the right.



Photograph 4: Showing the eastern façade of the 2-storey extension with the steep single-pitch element which terminates the otherwise flat roof on the northern aspect.



Photograph 5: Showing the fascia boards behind which gaps occur in several locations around the two-storey extension.



Photograph 6: Showing the granite chimney within the loft with slate tiles directly onto battens and light visible at the eaves indicating potential for internal access.