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PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

6 BAY VIEW TERRACE, PORTHMELLON, ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY



Client: Hannah Barclay

Our reference: 2021/01

Planning reference: Planning Application not submitted at the time of writing.

Report date: 5th August 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 structures by bats. This assessment relates solely to the roof structures identified by the client as those subject to a Planning Application as detailed in Appendix 1.

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 edition.¹

Bats – Further Survey Requirements

No further surveys are recommended – the PRA conclusion of negligible potential 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 renovation works assessed in this report.

Standard good practice and vigilance should be observed by the contractors undertaking the renovation works in acknowledgement that bats are transient in their use of roosting opportunities and may explore potential locations. This may include opportunities created as a result of renovation or construction works. Recommendations to ensure legislative compliance are provided in Appendix 2.

Nesting Birds – Results and Findings

The survey identified nesting sparrows within structures which may be affected by proposed renovation works and further potential for common bird species to use additional features.

Nesting Birds - Recommendations

In order to ensure legislative compliance, the contractors undertaking the works must ensure that nesting birds are not disturbed in accordance with requirements under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981)². Observation of the recommendations provided in Appendix 3 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 – these should be tailored to the species identified.

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.

² HMSO (1981). Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). HMSO, London.

APPENDIX 1 – PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

Planning Authority: Isles of Scilly	Grid reference: SV 90969 10798	Planning Application ref: Not submitted at the time of writing.
Planning application address: 6 Bay View Terrace, Porthmellon, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly		
Proposed development: The proposed works were identified by the client on site at the time of survey. These involve: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The renovation of a chalet to the rear of the property including replacement of the existing flat roof; 2) The replacement of the flat roof over the garage which is attached to the residential property on the north-eastern aspect; 3) The replacement of the roof on the existing flat-roof dormer bathroom on the eastern aspect of the property including tying into the adjacent pitched roof. 		
Building references: The elements of the building referred to in this report are illustrated in the plans provided in Appendix 4. These are the Chalet , the Garage and the Bathroom Dormer .		
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 3 rd August 2021 in accordance with relevant Best Practice methodology ³ .		
Local and Landscape Setting: 6 Bay View Terrace is situated at the end of a terraced row of six residential properties built circa 1900. They are located at the north-eastern edge of Porthmellon with Harry's Walls and open countryside to the east and Lower Moors SSSI to the south. The property is close to the coastline with the dunes above Porthmellon Beach lying less than 100m to the north-west. The location of the site on the boundary between the developed residential areas of Porthmellon and Hugh Town to the west; and the more open countryside which lies beyond these conurbations to the south and east would represent a suitable location for roosting bats. Several common pipistrelle roosts are known in Hugh Town and Porthmellon, the closest being situated 370m to the south-west.		
Building Description(s): Three discrete elements of the property were identified as subject to the Planning Application by the client. All areas identified were assessed during the PRA and are described individually.		

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

CHALET	<p>The chalet is a breeze-block structure situated to the rear of the main residential property. It has single-skin walls and a flat, bitumen felted roof. There is a small uPVC porch area at the entrance and uPVC windows continue throughout the building – all of these features are tightly fitted. The walls are rendered externally – this is in good condition providing an effective seal to the breeze block walls. The breeze blocks are exposed internally with no plasterboard remaining.</p> <p>The roof is supported by timber battens – these are exposed internally with no ceiling void. Chipboard is visible above the timbers and the felting is laid directly onto this offering no voids or gaps associated with the structure. The felting is tightly lapped over the eaves offering no roosting opportunities at this location.</p> <p>There is potential access for bats or birds to enter the building through a hole in the wall close to the eaves in the bathroom, or through open windows. Internally there are suitable niches for use by nesting birds including ledges. Potential roosting opportunities for bats entering through openings would be restricted to free-hanging from the timbers, or minor discreet gaps between the wall plate and the timber above. These gaps are occasional and were all well-cobwebbed showing no evidence of occupation at the time of survey.</p> <p>The chalet was stripped bare of fittings and internal decoration at the time of survey and was unused, awaiting renovation. A full inspection for signs of bat occupation including droppings or feeding remains identified no evidence of current or historic presence.</p>
GARAGE	<p>The garage is a single-story construction attached to the main residential property on the north-eastern aspect. It is a twin-skinned breeze block construction with no insulation in the void between the blocks. It has a flat, bitumen felted roof. There is no external door fitted at present with the void partially filled allowing free access above. uPVC windows are present on the north-eastern aspect - these are tightly fitted.</p> <p>The walls are rendered externally – this is in good condition providing an effective seal to the breeze block walls which are exposed internally. The void between the blocks is accessible where the door has been removed, but this is open at the top internally which both minimises its suitability as a roosting opportunity (offering no apex niches) and ensures that in the unlikely event of bats accessing this temporarily exposed void, there is no risk of entombment.</p> <p>The roof is supported by timber battens – these are exposed internally with no ceiling void. Chipboard is visible above the timbers and the felt is laid directly onto this offering no voids or gaps associated with the structure. The felting is tightly lapped over the eaves offering no roosting opportunities.</p> <p>There is potential access for bats or birds to enter the building through the missing garage door at present. Internally there are suitable niches for use by nesting birds. Potential roosting opportunities for bats entering through openings are restricted to free-hanging from the timbers.</p> <p>The garage remained in use for storage at the time of survey. A full inspection for signs of bat occupation including droppings or feeding remains identified no evidence.</p> <p>A fibreglass roof connecting the garage to the main dwelling was also inspected – no potential features suitable for use by roosting bats or nesting birds associated with this element of the construction were identified.</p>

DORMER BATHROOM	<p>The dormer provides an upstairs bathroom and is located on the eastern aspect of the property. The two walls adjacent to the property comprise the exterior walls of the main dwelling whilst the remaining two walls which face externally are constructed from timber frames with membrane and a timber cladding externally. The external cladding is well-fitted thereby offering no voids between the cladding and the membrane. Where the dormer abuts the residential property to the north-west, there is a small retaining wall sealed with fibreglass and a gully where it meets the pitch of the adjacent roof.</p> <p>There is a well-fitted fibreglass roof which has a gentle single pitch. The roof is supported by timber battens – these are exposed internally with no ceiling void. Chipboard is visible above the timbers and the fibreglass is laid directly onto this offering no voids or gaps associated with the structure. The fibreglass is tightly lapped over the eaves offering no roosting opportunities associated with this area.</p> <p>The proposals involve tying the new structure into the existing roof of the residential property; therefore this roof was included within the assessment to fully assess potential impacts. The roof of the main dwelling is open internally due to ongoing renovation works and the felting upon which the tiles are placed can be seen – no loft void or other cavity is present. The slate tiles are very well fitted offering no access beneath. There are no potential access points beneath the tiles from the eaves – these are well fitted and guttering further blocks any potential access to these.</p> <p>The proposals will also involve the replacement of soffits along the north-eastern aspect of the residential property. Sparrows were observed accessing a hole in this soffit in a manner which indicates an active nest at the time of survey. This use by nesting birds close to the entrance would make it highly unlikely for bats to use this feature.</p>
<p>Survey Limitations</p> <p>There were no limitations on access or visibility which would affect the results of the survey.</p>	
<p>Assessment of Potential for use by Roosting Bats</p> <p>It is considered that the chalet, garage and dormer bathroom all provide negligible potential for use by roosting bats.</p> <p>Those aspects of the retained main dwelling which would be affected by the works to the dormer bathroom, namely the slate-tiled roof and soffits, are also considered to provide negligible potential for use by roosting bats.</p>	
<p>Assessment of Potential for use by Nesting Birds</p> <p>It is considered that the openly accessible interiors of the chalet, and to a lesser extent the garage, provide potential nesting habitat for common bird species, though no current or historic nests were identified at the time of survey.</p> <p>The dormer bathroom itself offers no nesting opportunities for common bird species, though a sparrow nest was identified in the adjacent soffit which it is understood would be affected by the proposals.</p>	
<p>Recommendations and Justification (Bats):</p> <p>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.</p> <p>It is not recommended that any Planning Conditions are required with regards to bats in relation to the works affecting the structures identified by the client as those subject to a Planning Application.</p>	

Standard good practice and vigilance should be observed by the contractors undertaking the renovation works in acknowledgement that bats are transient in their use of roosting opportunities and may explore potential locations. This may include opportunities created as a result of renovation or construction works or opportunities within the soffit box if the sparrows cease to nest within this feature. Recommendations to ensure legislative compliance are provided in Appendix 2.

Recommendations and Justification (Birds):

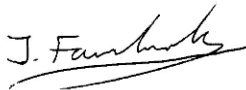
In order to ensure legislative compliance, the contractors undertaking the works must ensure that nesting birds are not disturbed in accordance with requirements under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). Observation of the recommendations provided in Appendix 3 will ensure this.

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.

As the proposals will result in the loss of a confirmed nest site for sparrows, it is recommended that mitigation measures to replace lost nesting features are incorporated into the design. House sparrows nest communally and nest boxes should 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. These should be mounted on the wall of the house 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 (<https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/give-nature-a-home-in-your-garden/garden-activities/createasparrowstreet/>)

Signed by bat worker(s):

Date: 5th August 2021



APPENDIX 2

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PRECAUTIONARY METHOD STATEMENT WITH REGARDS TO BATS

The purpose of this Method Statement is to ensure that renovation 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 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 to the given building structures:

If the nesting sparrows vacate the soffit box, there is a low potential for bats to find roosting opportunities within this structure throughout the year. It should be removed carefully by hand such that in the unlikely event of bats being present, they are identified before they are harmed.

There is a negligible potential for bats to find roosting opportunities on top of the wall plate in the chalet. Any roosting opportunities, if present, would be between the blockwork and attached timbers. These timbers should be removed carefully by hand such that, in the unlikely event of bats being present, they are identified before they are harmed.

No potential roosting opportunities were identified associated with the dormer bathroom or garage.

Contractors should be aware of **the process to follow in the 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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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 renovation works to be conducted outside the bird breeding season of March to September inclusive. Renovation works can be undertaken outside of the breeding season, March to September inclusive, without constraint.

In the specific situation of 6 Bay View Terrace, the only location where this timing is strongly recommended is in the case of the soffit box where an active sparrow nest was identified at the time of survey. No other evidence of active or historic nests were identified associated with the proposed renovation works.

Works Undertaken during the Breeding Season

If renovation works proceed during the breeding season, a nesting bird survey would need to be carried out by a suitably qualified person prior to clearance.

In the case of the soffit, careful observation would be required to ensure that the parent birds are no longer visiting the nest and provisioning the young.

In the case of the garage and chalet, it is recommended that the internal ledges and niches within the buildings are carefully inspected before the roof is removed if undertaken during the nesting season. 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.

APPENDIX 4

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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 – Illustrating the discrete elements of the property surveyed. The **Chalet** is shown in red; the **Garage** is shown in yellow and the **Dormer Bathroom** is shown in blue. Other elements of the property, excepting those directly impacted by the proposals for the dormer bathroom, were not subject to survey.



Photograph 1: Showing the interior of the bathroom dormer. The wall of the residential building is visible to the left with the timber frame of the external wall visible to the right. The timber roof structure and chipboard can also be seen above.



Photograph 2: Showing the timber cladding on the exterior of the bathroom dormer.



Photograph 3: Showing the existing gully between the fibre-glassed back wall of the dormer and the slate roof of the main property



Photograph 4: Showing the tightly fitted slate roof on the existing property. This is the retained roof into which the new roof structure of the bathroom dormer will be tied.



Photograph 5: Showing the interior of the roof of the main residential dwelling. This is the roof into which the new roof structure of the replacement bathroom dormer will be tied.



Photograph 6: Showing the exterior of the chalet building with the rendered wall, uPVC window and felted roof visible.



Photograph 7: Showing the interior of the chalet with exposed timber framework and chipboard above. The exposed breezeblock walls can also be seen.



Photograph 8: Showing the porch entrance to the chalet.



Photograph 9: Showing the garage (bottom right) with the open door visible. The bathroom dormer can be seen to the upper left of the image.



Photograph 10: Showing the interior of the garage with exposed breeze block walls and exposed timber roof structure above.