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PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT (PEA) 2023 UPDATE of 2021 REPORT BS44-2021

PENOLD, CHURCH STREET,
HUGH TOWN, ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY



Client: Ian Sibley

Our reference: 23-2-2

Planning reference: P/23/004/FUL

Report date: 9th February 2023

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Executive Summary

Scope of Report

A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) was produced for the property in 2021 – this document is reference BS44-2021 and should be read alongside this update report. This survey concluded that the dwelling had negligible potential for use by bats; however the proposals under consideration at the time were restricted to re-roofing works, and the report recommended an update be commissioned if works had not been completed by December 2021.

This update survey was completed on 9th February 2023 assessed the current condition of the buildings and the overall site to confirm whether the existing PEA – which included a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) – is appropriate to inform the current Planning Application (P/23/004/FUL). The surveyor was Licenced Bat Worker James Faulconbridge, MRes, MCIEEM.

Bats – Results and Findings

This updated 2023 PRA survey supports the overall conclusion of the 2021 PRA that there is **negligible potential** for use of the existing dwelling by bats.

Discreet features were identified which have the potential to support individual roosting bats on a transient basis; however these were considered low potential. The features were fully inspected with a video endoscope and no evidence of current or historic evidence was identified; therefore the residual risk of exploratory or opportunistic use by bats at the time of works can be controlled through an appropriate Precautionary Method of Works (PMW).

This judgement was reached in accordance with the survey methodologies outlined in the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 3rd edition.¹

Bats – Recommendations

Good practice and 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, especially if the condition of structural features were to change. A specific PMW methodology is provided in Appendix 1.

It should be emphasized that the 2023 PMW provided in Appendix 1 supersedes the PMW within the 2021 report. The original, superseded 2021 PMW is not sufficient to comprehensively address residual risks identified in the updated survey.

A Planning Condition requiring compliance with the **2023 PMW outlined in Appendix 1** could be attached to a Decision Notice. If so, it is recommended that this should be compliance only – no further information would be required as the methodology outlined in the PMW is comprehensive.

The recommendation within the 2021 report to install a bat box on the new dwelling is supported and should form part of any Planning Condition related to bats.

Other Ecological Receptors

The assessment of the Ecological Value of other aspects of the site outlined in the 2021 PEA report, including habitats and species, is confirmed without modification.

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

APPENDIX 1

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PRECAUTIONARY METHOD OF WORKS (PMW) WITH REGARDS TO BATS

The purpose of this Method Statement is to ensure that demolition 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 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 building and how works should proceed in these locations**. Please refer to the illustrated guide on the following pages to identify locations under discussion:

Feature A (Page 6)

Gap behind fascia on south-eastern corner

There is a gap where the uPVC fascias meet on the south-eastern corner of the flat-roof component of the property. This could potentially provide access for bats to roosting opportunities behind the fascia which runs along the southern aspect towards the main dwelling at this location.

These fascias should be unscrewed and removed carefully by hand to expose the location behind. Any void present should be carefully inspected for the potential presence of bats. The reverse of the fascia should also be checked carefully after removal before it is disposed of.

It is critical that this feature is exposed carefully such that if any bats were present, they would not be crushed or otherwise injured by the operation. Contractors should satisfy themselves that no bats are present before proceeding with works in these areas.

Features B, C and D (Pages 6 & 7)

Gaps behind fascia on dormer windows and east-facing gable

There are minor gaps where the uPVC fascias meet the wall in the on dormer windows and east-facing gable. Bats such as common pipistrelle can often be found in small crevices between the wall and fascia features. In this instance, the dimensions and depth are not considered to be optimal for roosting but a precautionary approach is essential to ensure legislative compliance.

The majority of these gaps behind fascias are sufficiently open and shallow that they can be inspected prior to the commencement of works to check for the presence of bats. A torch can be used to aid this inspection. Once contractors have completed this non-destructive visual check for bats, and confirmed absence, the features should then be carefully removed.

The fascias should be unscrewed and removed carefully by hand to expose the location behind. Any void present should be carefully inspected for the potential presence of bats. The reverse of the fascias should also be checked carefully after removal before it is disposed of.

It is critical that these features are exposed carefully such that if any bats were present, they would not be crushed or otherwise injured by the operation. Contractors should satisfy themselves that no bats are present before proceeding with works in these areas.

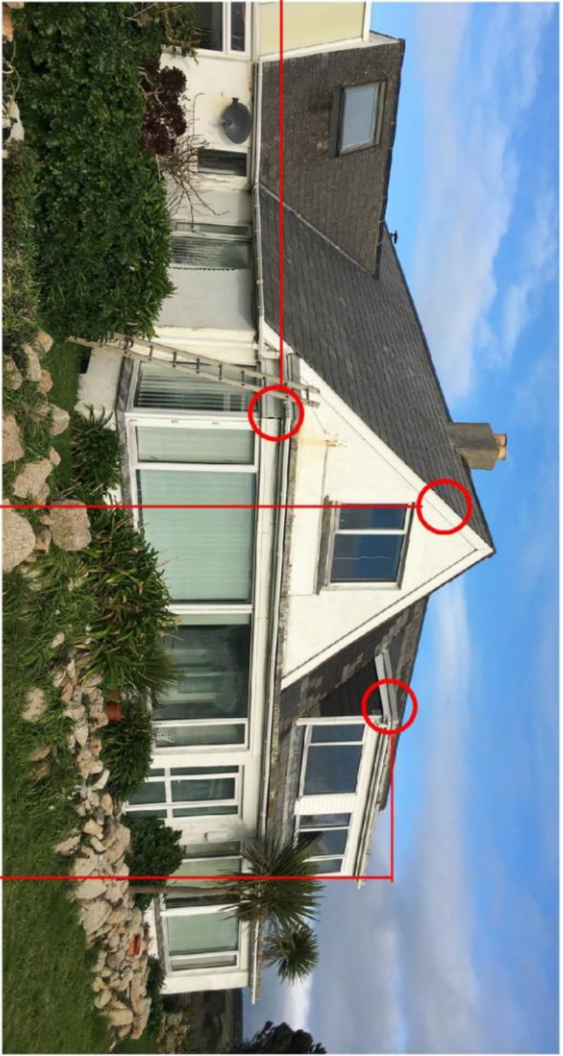
Contractors should be aware of **the process to follow in the highly unlikely event of finding bats** or evidence indicating that bats are likely to be present:

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.

Photograph showing the eastern aspect of the property.



Feature A - Gaps behind fascia on south-eastern corner of flat roof section



Feature B - Minor gap behind fascia on east-facing gable.



Feature C - Minor gap behind fascia above hanging tiles on dormer (north and south aspects)





Photograph showing the western aspect of the property.

No other potential features were noted which would require consideration under the MPW - including on the northern gable (not pictured).

Feature D - Minor gap behind fascia above hanging tiles on dormer (north and south aspects)

