

**RECEIVED**

*By Liv Rickman at 12:25 pm, Jan 30, 2023*

## PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

### CHIMNEY REMOVAL AT PINE TREES, BRYHER, ISLES OF SCILLY



*Client: Ian Sibley*

*Our reference: 22-6-4*

*Planning reference: Produced in advance of submission*

*Report date: 24<sup>th</sup> July 2022*

*Author: James Faulconbridge BSc (Hons), MRes, MCIEEM*

*Contact: ios.ecology@gmail.com*

# Executive Summary

## Bats - Results and Findings

The preliminary roost assessment (PRA) survey concluded that there was **negligible potential** for use the chimney and immediately surrounding roof structure by bats. This assessment relates solely to the elements of the structure which would be directly affected by the proposed chimney removal. It does not provide a comprehensive assessment of the property in question.

It is noted that adjacent features provide **low potential** roosting features for individual bats. These features would not be directly impacted by the proposed chimney removal works but are included in this assessment as measures would be required to ensure there is no disturbance or accidental damage during roof replacement.

There is also a minor residual risk of bats occupying roosting features elsewhere in the sealed loft space and therefore a residual risk that roosting bats might be indirectly affected through changes in internal conditions or disturbance during works. This risk is acknowledged due to lack of internal access to sealed roof voids.

## 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

Standard good practice and vigilance should be observed by the contractors undertaking the removal 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 adjacent features.

The methodology provided in Appendix 2 outlines measures to control the minor residual risk of bats occupying roost sites elsewhere in the loft space. This is considered to be appropriate to control the residual risk without a requirement for further surveys.

If the LPA is minded to approve the application, it is recommended that a Planning Condition is included which requires compliance with the Precautionary Method of Works (PMW) outlined in Appendix 2 of this report.

## Other Ecological Receptors

No further ecological impacts relevant to planning, including nesting birds, were identified.

## APPENDIX 1 – PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

<b>Planning Authority:</b> Isles of Scilly	<b>Location:</b> SV 87967 15119	<b>Planning Application ref:</b> Report produced in support of application
<b>Planning application address:</b> Pine Trees, Bryher, Isles of Scilly		
<b>Proposed development:</b> The proposed works were identified by Ian Sibley and accord with the documentation submitted in support of the application. These involve:  1) The removal of a redundant chimney from the roof of the property. This includes dismantling the chimney to below the roof level followed by re-tiling and making good.		
<b>Building references:</b> The roof section in question is identified in the plans provided in Appendix 3.		
<b>Name and licence number of bat-workers carrying out survey:</b> James Faulconbridge (2015-12724-CLS-CLS)		
<b>Preliminary Roost Assessment date:</b> The visual inspection was undertaken on 21 <sup>st</sup> July 2022 in accordance with relevant Best Practice methodology <sup>1</sup> .		
<b>Local and Landscape Setting:</b> The property is situated within The Town above Church Quay on Bryher in the Isles of Scilly.  The property is situated on the southern edge of the settlement with further residential properties and gardens situated immediately to the north, east and west. A garden dominated by a mown lawn with various scattered shrubs and areas of herbaceous planting extends to the immediate south of the property.  Beyond the residential dwellings to the north and south are areas of self-set shrubs and under-managed habitat which would provide a good quality foraging resource. The coastline is approximately 120m to the east and the beach and shoreline are likely to provide further foraging habitat. The land to the west, beyond the brow of the hill, is dominated by short grassland and bracken, with rocky and heathland habitats extending to the north.  Two common pipistrelle roosts are formally recorded on Bryher, and a further two are anecdotally recorded to the west of the Site. All of these roosts relate to non-breeding summer roosts of common pipistrelle, or are not fully characterised.  Ongoing static detector surveys on the island support the current understanding that common pipistrelle is the only resident species on Bryher.		

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

### **Building Description(s):**

Pine trees is a residential property which comprises two distinct components – a semi-detached two-storey house and a single-storey extension. The proposed works are restricted to removal of a chimney from the two-storey house component of the property and therefore the single-storey extension will not be further considered in this assessment.

The two-storey dwelling has rendered lowers with wood-cladding on the upper storey. The multi-pitched slate-tiled roof includes some hipped sections. Guttering is attached to small soffits which are generally in good condition. The brick-built chimney under consideration in this assessment is situated towards the south of the property where there is a small drop in ridge height between different sections of the roof.

The proposals in this application are restricted to the removal of a chimney. The PRA survey therefore is focused on the chimney, and those adjacent structural elements which would be directly impacted by its removal. This survey report does not represent a comprehensive assessment of the property as a whole.

#### *Chimney*

Externally, the chimney is low and brick-built comprising just three courses above the ridge. The union between the chimney and the roof has concrete flashing with lead flashing lapping the join. The brickwork of the chimney itself appears to be in good condition with very minor gaps in the mortar which appear superficial and too small to support roosting bats. A single small, low pot appears to be present.

It was not possible to inspect the chimney below the tiles due to lack of access to the sealed void.

The chimney itself does not appear to offer any roosting opportunities for bats at the time of survey.

#### *Roofs and Loft Spaces*

The chimney is situated on the higher element of the roof at the point where there is a drop in ridge height from north to south. The roof surrounding the chimney has slate tiles in good condition, as well as well-sealed ridge tiles. Individual tiles have minor gaps beneath, but these appear too small and superficial to offer roosting opportunities for bats.

The internal rooms of the upper floor are built partially into the roof space leaving a small void above. This was sealed with no internal access for the majority of the roof space. A single hatch was present towards the northern end of the property but the small void was occupied by a hot water tank and inspection of the loft space was possible only from the hatch itself. The chimney structure could not be inspected internally.

The limited inspection of the roof space revealed granite construction of end-walls with roofing membrane above the timber structure. The membrane looked to be relatively new and in good condition. The external condition and structure of the roof indicates that this internal condition is likely to describe the roof space beyond the location directly inspected.

No evidence of bats was identified, though access was significantly constrained.

#### *Adjacent Features*

The soffits of the building appeared well-sealed with no gaps noted for the majority of the structure – however the point where the hipped roof section meets the main pitch of the two-storey dwelling may have accessible gaps at the point of union.

There are several locations where there is lead flashing associated with the roof structure– such as the point where the pitch of the roof changes adjacent to the chimney. This is generally in good condition though discreet sections were slightly lifted which could potentially offer

transient roosting opportunities for individual bats.

Occasional minor lifted tiles occur in the roof though not in the immediate environs of the chimney. These all appear too tightly fitted to offer roosting opportunities though changes in condition may occur in time which would allow them to offer transient roosting features.

### **Survey Limitations**

It was not possible to comprehensively inspect all features such as lead flashing around the chimney due to the lack of access at height and visual obstructions by intervening structures. However the majority of the relevant features could be fully inspected with binoculars and their structure and condition does not indicate a high probability of unobserved features on other aspects. The residual risk arising from this constraint can be addressed through a Precautionary Method of Works (PMW).

The sealed voids throughout most of the roof structure, combined with the small size of the accessible loft space and obstructions such as water tanks, meant that access to inspect the roof void internally was very limited. The condition of the exterior of the roof however indicates a low likelihood of bats accessing the internal loft space. The internal dimensions/obstructions would reduce the quality of the void for use by bats. The residual risk arising from this constraint can be addressed through a Precautionary Method of Works (PMW).

### **Assessment of Potential for use by Roosting Bats**

It is considered that the chimney to be removed provides **negligible potential** for use by roosting bats.

Adjacent structures such as the soffit to the hipped roof section and minor areas of lifted lead flashing 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** related to the chimney structure to be removed does not require any further information with regards to bats in order to inform a planning application.

Standard good practice and vigilance should be observed by the contractors undertaking the chimney removal 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 opportunities associated with adjacent structural features means that these features must not be impacted during works.

The flashing around the join between the chimney and the roof should be removed carefully and by hand in order to ensure that, in the unlikely event of bats finding a roosting niche due to changes in structural condition, they would not be harmed or killed.

Contractors should be vigilant to the low risk of bats being present within the roof space away from the chimney itself, and the schedule and method of works should aim to minimise disturbance of the loft space. This includes working quickly to re-seal the roof following removal of the chimney; minimising noise and other disturbance; ensuring appropriate timing of works and weather conditions; and avoiding excess dust arising from the works.

Recommended measures to achieve these recommendations and ensure legislative compliance are provided in Appendix 2.

It is recommended that a compliance condition is included in any Planning Application approval requiring that works proceed in line with the PMW requirements outlined in Appendix 2 of this

report. It is not recommended that further paperwork or evidence is required to discharge this. The reason for this recommendation is in order to ensure that roosting bats are not negatively impacted by the chimney removal works.

**Assessment of Potential for use by Nesting Birds**

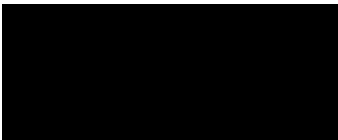
The chimney feature under consideration and the adjacent roof structure does not appear to offer any nesting opportunities for birds.

**Recommendations and Justification (Birds):**

No recommendations are required or provided with regards to nesting birds.

**Signed by bat worker(s):**

**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> July 2022



## APPENDIX 2

-

### PRECAUTIONARY METHOD STATEMENT WITH REGARDS TO BATS

The purpose of this Method Statement is to ensure that chimney removal 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 chimney structure:**

There is a negligible risk of bats making transient use of minor cavities associated with the lead flashing which seals the joint between the chimney and the roof structure, especially if there is a change in condition between the date of survey and the commencement of works.

This flashing should be removed carefully and by hand in such a way that if any bats are present beneath, they are not crushed or otherwise injured by the action. Once this location has been exposed and it has been confirmed that no bats are present, works can proceed.

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 associated with:

- Lead flashing, where lifted, especially along the location where the pitch of the roof drops adjacent to the chimney;
- Gaps under lifted tiles within the roof;
- Very minor gaps associated with the soffits of the hipped-roof section where it joins the main roof structure;

The chimney removal works can proceed in proximity to, but must not impact upon, the above structural features in order for the assessment and working methodology outlined in this report to be valid.

Care should be taken during works to ensure that these structures are not disturbed, obstructed, or damaged. This involves careful design of scaffolding installation and may include a contractor briefing to ensure that those working on the roof understand the requirement. Other measures such as a temporary sign, tape or physical barrier should be installed if deemed necessary.

Contractors should be aware of **the residual low risk that bats could occur within the loft space to be affected by chimney removal.**

There is minor residual risk of individual bats finding roosting opportunities elsewhere within the roof space – indirect impacts such as noise, disturbance or changes in internal conditions should be minimised to the greatest extent possible as a precaution. This includes:

- Undertaking works in good weather conditions, avoiding periods of cold temperatures (below 10°C), strong wind or heavy rainfall such that any change in internal conditions which occurs during the chimney removal



will be minimised;

- Working quickly to re-seal the roof following removal of the chimney in order to reduce the timeframe within which internal conditions are altered, and reduce the period of disturbance arising from construction works;
- Minimising disturbance from construction activities including noise, vibration and general contractor presence to the greatest extent possible;
- Avoiding excess dust arising from the works which might enter and affect the internal loft space.

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

-

### 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 highlighted in red. The main 2-storey dwelling is to the east and is attached to a further property on this aspect. The renovated single-storey packing barn which comprises the extension to the property is situated to the west.



**Photograph 1:** Showing the brick-built chimney viewed from the west. The chimney is visible along with the change in ridge height. Examples of 'adjacent feature' locations are highlighted including the potential access to the soffit (red arrow) and lifted lead flashing (blue arrow).



**Photograph 2:** Showing a closer view of the chimney taken from the east.



**Photograph 3:** Showing a closer view of the chimney taken from the west.



**Photograph 4:** Showing the accessible loft space with water tank. The new roofing membrane above the timber roof structure is visible.