

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

THE WHEELHOUSE, HUGH TOWN, ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY



Client: Replan Architects

Our reference: 22-12-1

Planning reference: Produced in advance of submission

Report date: 22nd December 2022

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Executive Summary

Bats - Results and Findings

The preliminary roost assessment (PRA) survey of the structures either directly or indirectly impacted by the proposals concluded that there is **negligible potential** for use by bats.

This assessment relates solely to the elements of the structure which would be affected - it does not provide a comprehensive assessment of the building in question.

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 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 methodology is provided in Appendix 1.

A Planning Condition requiring compliance with the Precautionary Method of Works (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.

Nesting Birds - Results and Findings

The survey of structural features to be directly or indirectly impacted by the proposed works identified no nesting locations suitable for use by breeding birds.

There are evergreen shrubs adjacent to the single-storey pitched roof component on the southern aspect which may be capable of supporting nesting birds.

Nesting Birds - Recommendations

Care should be taken erecting scaffolding etc. in order to ensure adjacent shrubs and other vegetation are not disturbed if works proceed in the nesting season.

There is no requirement to replace nesting habitat for breeding birds as no suitable features would be affected. If the applicant wishes to provide biodiversity enhancement, nest boxes could be erected either on the dwelling or within the residential garden. Guidance on suitable specifications is provided.

Other Ecological Receptors

No further ecological impacts relevant to planning are identified.

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

Planning Authority: Isles of Scilly	Location: SV 90259 10469	Planning Application ref: Report produced in support of application
Planning application address: The Wheelhouse, Hugh Town, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly		
Proposed development: The proposed works were identified by the client and should accord with the documentation submitted in support of the application. These involve: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The construction of a second storey managers accommodation on the footprint of the existing single-storey pitched roof component of the property; 2) Removal of the lean-to utility area on the western aspect of the property; 3) Indirect impacts on adjacent single-pitched roof on the southern aspect and the two-storey pitched roof through construction in close proximity and potential minor incursion. <p>This assessment takes into account both the potential direct impacts to the structure (e.g. demolition or removal of structural elements) and the indirect impacts (e.g. blocking or obstructing roost entrances as a result of extensions).</p>		
Building references: The roof sections discussed in this report are identified in the plans provided in Appendix 2.		
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 15 th December 2022 in accordance with relevant Best Practice methodology ¹ .		
Local and Landscape Setting: The buildings are located on Porthcressa in Hugh Town, St Mary's. Little Porth runs along the northern boundary of the property with a pedestrian access to Porthcressa Beach running along the eastern aspect. There are further residential properties close on the western boundary and Porthcressa Beach itself lies to the immediate south, just beyond an amenity garden area. The central location within Hugh Town means that the dominant local land use is built environment to the north, with the beach and shoreline of Porthcressa to the south. The development associated with Hugh Town is predominantly residential with small-scale commercial businesses also represented. This densely built environment extends around 300m to the west and around 500m to the east. Some of these adjacent properties have associated areas of garden or green space, but the centre of Hugh Town is relatively densely developed. The location of the property is within the narrowest part of Hugh Town with Porthcressa Beach immediately to the south, and Town Beach lying approximately 100m to the north.		

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

Aside from the shoreline of Porthcressa which lies just to the south of the property, the next closest areas of semi-natural habitat are associated with the Garrison approximately 200m to the west; and the land around Buzza Tower approximately 300m to the south-east.

The desk study showed that no species of bat had previously been recorded roosting in the property or associated with properties bounding the property. A data search revealed information on five species of bat recorded on St Mary's. The species conclusively identified were common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*). Leisler's bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*) and Nathusius pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*) records were also returned though these species are not known to be resident on the island. Three records of common pipistrelle roosts are identified in relatively close proximity to the north-east of the property – these relate to individual bats utilising features such as hanging slates around dormer windows.

Building Description(s):

The property is a guesthouse including managers accommodation. It comprises several distinct components but for the sake of brevity and relevance, only those structures which might be directly or indirectly affected by the proposals were assessed with regards to their potential to support roosting bats. These components are identified in Map 02.

Single-storey pitched roof

This is the component of the building which would be directly affected by the proposals. The structure is rendered in excellent condition with no gaps, cracks or damage noted. uPVC windows are well-fitted and in good condition. The roof is tiled with slate tiles and ridge tiles, all of which were well-fitted and in good condition. Wooden soffits and fascias on the gables were tightly fitted with no gaps noted. Superficial gaps beneath the terminal roof tiles on the gable were noted – these did not appear to lead to voids or other roosting opportunities.

Internally, the loft space is converted to regularly accessed storage space – the area is well-used with a roof light window. The void is under-boarded throughout with recent and well-fitted membrane above – visible in places between ply sheets. No internal roosting opportunities were identified. The void connects internally with the void of the single-pitch roof which runs along the southern aspect of the property. No evidence of bats was noted.

Double-storey pitched roof

This two-storey structure rises from single-storey flat-roof components to the east and west with the single-pitched flat roof to the south and the hipped roof to the north. The walls are well-rendered with tightly fitted uPVC windows and frames. The roof has well-fitted slate tiles and ridge tiles with no gaps noted from inspection from the west. uPVC soffits and guttering on the eaves, and uPVC fascias on the gables are well-fitted with no gaps noted.

Internally, the loft space is under-felted in good condition, with a boarded floor and bare breeze-block walls. There is a ridge board present but no internal roosting opportunities were identified aside from free-hanging from internal timbers. Light showing at the gable identifies potential access for bats into the internal space, but no evidence of access or occupation were noted. As the potential access is on the southern gable, any works indirectly affecting the western aspect would not affect potential access to the void.

Single-pitched roof

A single-pitched roof runs along the southern aspect of the property, tying in with the single-storey pitched roof component. Slate tiles and flashing at the union with adjacent structures appear to be tight, well-fitted and in good condition.

Internally, the roof has a low void which connects in with the internal void of the single-storey pitched roof component. There is underfelting in good condition, around a relatively recent

timber frame structure. Access for bats would be possible from the eaves on the southern aspect, though no evidence of access or recent occupation were noted. Internal roosting opportunities would be restricted to free-hanging from timbers.

Lean-to utility area

There is a lean-to utility area attached to the western aspect of the building. This is constructed around a breeze-block wall which is plaster-boarded internally. The roof comprises corrugated translucent PVC sheets which make the interior light. No roosting opportunities were identified associated with this structure.

Survey Limitations

There were no limitations on access or visibility to components of the structure which would be directly affected by the proposals.

Inspection of the double-storey pitched roof component was from the western aspect only, but as only indirect effects to this aspect are proposed, and as a comprehensive internal inspection was completed, this is not considered to affect the results of the survey.

Assessment of Potential for use by Roosting Bats

It is considered that the building components to be directly affected by the proposals have **negligible potential** to support roosting bats. The tiles at the gables have minor superficial gaps which have a very low probability of use by exploratory bats – this residual unlikely risk can be controlled through an appropriate Precautionary Method of Works (PMW).

There is potential for bats to access the adjacent single-pitched roof and double-storey pitched roof, though no evidence of occupation nor suitable internal roosting opportunities were noted. The proposals would not affect the potential internal access points and no external roosting opportunities were identified.

No other potential roosting opportunities were identified associated with the elements of the structure which are to be directly or indirectly affected by the proposed works.

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.

Standard good practice and vigilance should be observed during the removal of the terminal tiles at the gable of the single-storey pitched roof in acknowledgement that bats are transient in their use of roosting opportunities and may explore potential locations. The terminal 3 rows of tiles at each gable should be removed carefully and by hand in order to ensure that, in the unlikely event of bats utilising this potential feature, they would not be harmed or killed. Recommended measures to achieve this recommendation and ensure legislative compliance are provided in the PMW outlined in Appendix 1.

A Planning Condition requiring compliance with the 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.

Assessment of Potential for use by Nesting Birds

No suitable nesting habitat for birds was identified associated with the elements of the building to be directly or indirectly affected by the proposals – however minor gaps at eaves of indirectly affected buildings could potentially be used by species such as wren or robin.

There are evergreen shrubs adjacent to the single-storey pitched roof component on the

southern aspect which may be capable of supporting nesting birds.

Recommendations and Justification (Birds):

Vegetation to the south of the property should not be directly impacted by the proposed works; however care should be taken erecting scaffolding etc. in order to ensure these are not disturbed if works proceed in the nesting season.

Caution and vigilance should be exercised if works take place during the breeding season (March – September inclusive) to ensure that if any birds are nesting in features associated with the structures in close proximity to the works – including the single-pitch roof to the south and the double-storey pitched roof to the east – they are identified and works are designed to avoid damage or disturbance.

There is no requirement to mitigate for loss of nesting habitat for breeding birds; however if the applicant wished to provide biodiversity enhancement measures, this could be achieved through the erection of bird boxes on the property or within the garden.

House sparrows nest communally and nest boxes could 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. Nest boxes suitable for hole-dwelling species such as blue tits, or open-fronted boxes for species such as blackbird and robin also have a high likelihood of occupation.

Boxes should be mounted on a wall or tree 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.

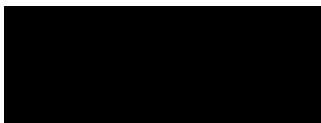
Boxes can be sourced online, or can be constructed on site using methodology and specifications provided by the RSPB:

Sparrows: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/give-nature-a-home-in-your-garden/garden-activities/createasparrowstreet/>

Other Species: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-families/family-wild-challenge/activities/build-a-birdbox/>

Signed by bat worker(s):

Date: 22nd December 2022



APPENDIX 1

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PRECAUTIONARY METHOD STATEMENT WITH REGARDS TO BATS

The purpose of this Method Statement is to ensure that demolition and construction 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 structure:**

There is a negligible risk of bats making transient use of minor cavities associated with the terminal roof tiles on the gables of the single-storey pitched roof component of the building. These appear superficial but temporary use by exploratory bats cannot be ruled out.

The terminal three rows of tiles at both gable ends 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 these tiles have been removed and it has been confirmed that no bats are present, works can proceed.

No other suitable features for use by roosting bats are identified within the structures to be directly or indirectly impacted by the proposed works; however contractors should be aware that bats may make transient use of highly unlikely roosting opportunities which can be present within the existing structure, or be created as a result of ongoing renovation/construction works. Contractors should therefore be vigilant to the potential presence of bats in unanticipated locations throughout the works, and be aware of the actions (outlined below) which should be taken if bats are identified or suspected.

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 2

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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 overall property (blue line/wash) with the single-storey pitched roof shown with the red line/wash. The single-pitched roof on the southern aspect of the property, to which the single-storey pitched roof is internally connected, is shown in the pink line/wash. The lean-to on the western aspect of the property is shown in a green line/wash. The adjacent two-storey pitched roof is shown in a yellow line/wash.



Photograph 1: Showing the interior loft space of the single-storey pitched roof component of the building.



Photograph 2: Showing the interior loft space of the single-pitch roof which runs along the southern aspect of the building.



Photograph 3: Showing well-fitted roof and ridge tiles of the single-storey pitched roof component. The skylight window can be seen along with the flat roof which connects this component of the structure with the two-storey pitched roof to the east.



Photograph 4: Showing the northern gable of the single-storey pitched roof component of the building.



Photograph 5: Showing the two-storey pitched roof section of the building which lies to the east of the single-storey pitched roof.



Photograph 6: Showing the southern gable and western aspect of the single-storey pitched roof section of the building which looks out onto Porthcressa.



Photograph 7: Showing the lean-to on the western aspect of the single-storey pitched roof component of the building.



Photograph 8: Showing the inside of the lean-to building used as a utility and storage space.