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PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

WINGLETANG, ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY



Client: EGV Consultancy Ltd

Our reference: 23-7-3

Planning reference: Report produced in advance of submission

Report date: 23rd July 2023

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Executive Summary

Bats - Results and Findings

The preliminary roost assessment (PRA) survey concluded that there was **negligible bat roosting potential** in relation to the structures to be impacted by the proposed works. This assessment relates solely to those aspects of the structure within the scope of the survey – it does not represent a comprehensive assessment of the property.

Whilst a negligible potential is concluded, it is noted that there is a small chance of opportunistic/transient use of individual discreet features. This potential is not sufficient to justify further surveys or significant constraints to works, but should be taken into account in accordance with the precautionary principle.

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 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 2.

Nesting Birds - Results and Findings

The survey did not identify any suitable nesting habitat for breeding birds associated with the elements of the structure under assessment.

Nesting Birds - Recommendations

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.

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

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

Planning Authority: Isles of Scilly	Location: SV 90392 10507	Planning Application ref: Report produced in advance of application
Planning application address: Wingletang, Church Street, Hugh Town, St Marys		
Proposed development: The proposed works were identified in plans provided by the project's architect Chris Carr. The proposals include: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Removal and reinstatement of top-floor walls closer to the eaves to extend the living space;2) Like-for-like replacement of existing roof lights;3) Replacement of windows and doors in the southern aspect of the flat-roof component of the property, including both like-for-like replacements and changes in layout; For clarity and brevity, this report focusses on those aspects of the property which would be directly or indirectly impacted by the above proposals only. It does not represent a comprehensive assessment of the property as a whole, much of which would not be affected by the proposals.		
Building references: The building comprises two distinct elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Main pitched-roof property;• Flat-roof extension. These structural elements are identified in the plans provided in Appendix 1.		
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 19 th July 2023 in accordance with relevant Best Practice methodology ² .		
Local and Landscape Setting: The property is a mid-terrace Bed & Breakfast located on Church Street in Hugh Town. The road runs to the north of the property with a small garden to the south with further residential buildings beyond. The immediate eastern and western aspects are bounded by further properties within the terrace. The central location of the property within Hugh Town means that the dominant local land use is built environment. This is predominantly residential with small-scale commercial businesses		

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

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 building is within the narrowest part of Hugh Town with Town Beach and Porthcressa lying 75m to the north and 50m to the south respectively.

The closest areas of green space are the Parade Gardens 10m to the north-west; and the grassed area adjacent to Porthcressa Beach lying to the south-west. Both of these areas are dominated by close-mown amenity grassland with ornamental planting, reflecting their popularity with visitors and fundamentally municipal function. The closest areas of semi-natural habitat are associated with the Garrison approximately 250m to the west; and the land around Buzza Tower approximately 250m to the south-east.

Building Description

There are two distinct structural elements which comprise the Wingletang Bed & Breakfast. Due to their varying styles of construction, these are considered independently in the following description and are identified in the map provided in Appendix 1.

Main pitched-roof Building

The main building is a granite-block mid-terrace property with residential accommodation built into the dormer roof. The only proposals affecting this portion of the property relate to the replacement of existing roof-lights like-for-like and the removal and reinstatement of internal top-floor walls towards the eaves. The following description therefore focusses on the top floor and roof of the property.

Internally, the majority of the top floor is converted to residential accommodation. There are very minor sealed voids above the ceiling at the apex in places, though these would be too small to allow internal flight by bats. There is eaves storage built into the dormer roof. These voids are accessed by multiple hatches as several physically separated voids are created by the intervening stairways and dormer windows. The voids are well-insulated throughout including insulation between rafters with other minor gaps filled. There is rudimentary under-boardings of the ceilings within these voids using plasterboard sheets. Whilst the voids are not part of the regular residential accommodation, they are carpeted and used for regular storage of various items indicating routine access. No evidence of bats or other species (such as rodents) were identified within these voids and there appeared little or no scope for bats to access these spaces.

The roof itself is wet-laid scantle tiles and appeared to be in excellent condition, especially around the existing roof-light windows which are to be replaced. The flashing around these windows was tightly sealed and no potential features for use by bats could be identified in these locations. There are occasional examples of missing mortar beneath tiles, though these appear largely superficial.

Flat-roof extension

A two-storey flat-roof extension is present on the southern aspect of the property. This is rendered white and both the structure and finish appears to be in good condition.

The windows and doors on the southern aspect are uPVC and well-fitted within their frames – no gaps around frames or sills could be identified. There is a lean-to on the eastern edge of the extension which has an access door. This component of the structure is timber-clad but the cladding is tightly fitted with no gaps noted.

Proximate structural features not directly affected by proposals

The fascia running along the eaves of the flat-roof building and the lean-to have minor gaps in places – these gaps were inspected with a torch and binoculars but no evidence of bats was

noted. They could however theoretically provide roosting opportunities for bats.

Survey Limitations

There were no significant limitations to access or survey inspection which might affect the evidence base or subsequent conclusions of this survey.

Assessment of Potential for use by Roosting Bats

No evidence of current or historic use by bats was identified during the survey and an overall **negligible potential** was determined; however it is noted that there is a small residual risk of opportunistic/transient use of the proximate structural features noted.

This assessment relates only to the aspects of the property subject to survey with regards to the proposals under consideration.

Recommendations and Justification (Bats):

No further surveys are recommended – the conclusion of **negligible potential** relating to the structural elements impacted by the works does not require any further information with regards to bats in order to inform a planning application.

It is not recommended that any Planning Conditions are required with regards to bats in relation to the proposed works.

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. The potential for individual common pipistrelle bats to make use of minor features associated with adjacent structural elements of the building means that these features must not be impacted during works. This would require due care to avoid disturbance or accidental damage. Recommendations to ensure legislative compliance are provided in Appendix 2.

Assessment of Potential for use by Nesting Birds

No suitable habitat for use by nesting birds was identified associated with the structural features which would be directly or indirectly impacted by the proposals.

Recommendations and Justification (Nesting Birds):

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 residential 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: 23rd July 2023



APPENDIX 1
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LOCATION PLAN AND PHOTOGRAPHS



Map 01 – Illustrating the location of the property within the local environs (red circle). Reproduced in accordance with Google’s Fair Use Policy.



Map 02 – Showing the main pitched roof mid-terrace property (red wash) with the flat-roof extension to the rear (blue wash). Please note boundaries are indicative and illustrative only.



Photograph 1: Showing the tight fitting of the existing rooflight windows and adjacent wet-laid scantle tiles.



Photograph 2: Showing the top floor of the property with some minor apex voids (as indicated) but with the ceiling built to the ridge beam in others.



Photograph 3: Showing an example of the eaves storage space, as viewed from the residential accommodation.



Photograph 4: Showing the typical interior of one of the eaves storage spaces.



Photograph 5: Showing the southern aspect of the property – the tightly fitted uPVC windows and doors are visible.



Photograph 6: Showing the access door in the lean-to component – the fascia above is indicated.



Photograph 7: Showing an example of the gaps behind the fascia on the southern aspect of the flat-roof component.

APPENDIX 2

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PRECAUTIONARY METHOD STATEMENT WITH REGARDS TO BATS

The purpose of this Method Statement is to ensure that the 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:**

The area of the structure to be directly impacted by the proposals would not support roosting bats; however adjacent structural features do provide low potential and these are considered below.

Construction activities including scaffolding have potential to obstruct, disturb or damage adjacent structures if not planned appropriately. Contractors should therefore 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 behind the fascia which runs along the eaves of the flat-roof extension and the associated lean-to.

The proposed works can approach, but must not impact upon or obstruct, these 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 project 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 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.