

## PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

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KENWYN,  
ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY



*Client: Jon Bowden*

*Our reference: 24-1-5*

*Planning reference: Report produced in advance of submission*

*Report date: 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024*

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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 the northern pitch of the main roof – 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 4th edition.<sup>1</sup>

## 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 courtyard garden. Guidance on suitable specifications is provided.

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<sup>1</sup> Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London

# PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

<b>Planning Authority:</b> Isles of Scilly	<b>Location:</b> SV 90549 10520	<b>Planning Application ref:</b> Report produced in advance of application
<b>Planning application address:</b> Kenwyn, Church Street, Hugh Town, St Marys		
<b>Proposed development:</b> The proposed works were identified verbally by the client. The proposals are restricted to: 1) Re-roofing the northern pitch of the main roof. For clarity and brevity, this report focuses 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.		
<b>Building references:</b> The building comprises two distinct elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Main terrace building;</li><li>• Extensions on the southern aspect.</li></ul> These structural elements are identified in the plans provided in Appendix 1.		
<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 26 <sup>th</sup> January 2024 in accordance with relevant Best Practice methodology <sup>2</sup> .		
<b>Local and Landscape Setting:</b> The property is a mid-terrace dwelling split into flats located on Church Street in Hugh Town. The road runs to the north of the property with a small courtyard 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 also represented. This densely built environment extends around 500m to the west and around 300m 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 narrower part of Hugh Town with Town Beach and Porthcressa lying 100m to the north and 150m to the south respectively.		

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<sup>2</sup> Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition).  
The Bat Conservation Trust, London

The closest areas of semi-natural habitat are associated with the Garrison approximately 500m to the west; Lower Moors approximately 350m to the east; and the land around Buzza Tower approximately 120m to the south-east.

### **Building Description**

There are two distinct structural elements which comprise the property – these are identified in the map provided in Appendix 1.

The proposals would neither directly or indirectly impact the extensions to the south of the main terrace building; therefore these elements of the structure are not given further consideration in this report.

#### *Main pitched-roof Building*

The main building is a granite-block mid-terrace property with residential accommodation across three stories with the upper floor built into the dormer roof.

Internally, the majority of the top floor is converted to residential accommodation. There is a minor sealed void above the ceiling at the apex in part of the roof, though these would be too small to allow internal flight by bats and is occupied by a water tank. There is insulation board tightly fitted between the rafters which appears to prevent access into the void, though inspection was not comprehensive due to the lack of access. There is eaves storage built into the dormer roof on both the northern and southern aspects, but these are used to house a hot water tank or for daily storage and none of these would be suitable for use by roosting bats.

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 well-sealed. There was a single instance where the pointing is missing from a ridge tile but this appeared to be superficial. The dormer window built into the northern pitch of the roof has hanging tiles which appear well sealed. There is a minor section of flashing lifted in the valley between the dormer roof and the main roof. The junctions with the roof-covering of adjacent terrace properties is tight and does not offer any roosting opportunities.

A chimney in the roof is concrete rendered – this was in good condition and the junction with the main roof did not appear to offer any roosting opportunities.

The boxed soffits, supporting guttering, are well-sealed and in good condition.

#### *Proximate structural features not directly affected by proposals*

Window and door frames on the northern aspect of the building appear to be tightly fitted in their apertures with no gaps noted. There is no potential disturbance which could therefore arise from installation of scaffolding or other enabling works.

The southern pitch of the main roof was dry-laid slate tiles which appeared to be well-sealed and in good condition. Works to the northern pitch are not therefore likely to have any indirect impact on potential roosting opportunities beyond the ridge.

### **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 individual features.

### **Recommendations and Justification (Bats):**

No further surveys are recommended – the conclusion of **negligible potential** related to the structures to be impacted 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 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 listed features should be taken into account during works. These features are:

- The lead flashing associated with the roof of the dormer;
- Any minor gaps beneath roof/ridge tiles which may be present, or may arise due to change of condition between the time of survey and the time of works;

At the discretion of the Planning Authority, a compliance condition could be included in any Planning Application approval requiring that works proceed in line with the PMW requirements outlined in Appendix 2 of this report. This is in order to ensure that roosting bats are not impacted by the proposed works.

The proposals would not affect any confirmed roosts, commuting routes or foraging habitat – therefore no habitat creation is required with regards to roosting bats.

The location of the building, coupled with the abundance of potential roosting habitat within Hugh Town, would make the likelihood of occupation of bat boxes relatively low – these are not therefore recommended.

### **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 courtyard 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 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:** 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024



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 extensions to the rear (blue wash). Please note boundaries are indicative and illustrative only.



**Photograph 1:** Showing the northern aspect of Kenwyn



**Photograph 2:** Showing the minor lifted section of lead flashing around the junction between the dormer and the main roof



**Photograph 3:** Showing the well-sealed boxed soffit on the northern aspect with guttering attached



**Photograph 4:** Showing the top floor residential accommodation built into the apex of the roof throughout much of the span



**Photograph 5:** Showing the water tank within the small loft void present in a portion of the roof. The insulation boards between the rafters can be seen.



## 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 roof to be replaced:**

### **Lead Flashing**

Minor lifted sections occur within the lead flashing where the dormers meet the roof tiles below, and in the valley between the pitch of the dormer and the adjacent roof.

If these are to be removed as part of the works, locations where the flashing is lifted should be exposed carefully such that if any bats were present behind the lifted element, 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.

### **Roof/Ridge Tiles**

There is a minor gap noted beneath an individual ridge tile. This appears superficial but it is possible that minor niches may occur. In addition, further gaps may appear if the condition of tiles deteriorates between the time of survey and the time of works.

If there are gaps beneath tiles, these tiles and those adjacent to them should be lifted carefully in such a way that if any bats were roosting beneath, they would not be crushed or injured by the action. The undersides of the tiles should be carefully checked before being set aside. 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.