

## BAT PRESENCE/ABSENCE SURVEYS (PAS)

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### VERONICA LODGE, ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY



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## Executive Summary

<b>Overview</b>
<p>One Presence/Absence Survey (PAS) was undertaken on the property known as Veronica Lodge to assess the use of the structure by roosting bats in advance of proposed renovation works.</p> <p>This was undertaken to provide an evidence base which meets Best Practice Guidance following the initial findings of the Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) report.</p>
<b>Results</b>
<p>The survey did not identify any bats emerging from the property.</p> <p>The survey recorded moderate activity levels of common pipistrelle bats foraging to the rear of the property - no other bat species were recorded.</p>
<b>Conclusion</b>
<p>The survey evidence accords with the Best Practice Guidance requirements to conclude 'Likely Absence' of bats.</p> <p>No further surveys are required and there is no requirement for a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML).</p>
<b>Mitigation Strategy</b>
<p>As no roosts were identified, there is no requirement for mitigation measures to be built into the development.</p> <p>A precautionary method of working would represent good practice during re-roofing and renovation works – outline recommendations are provided in this report.</p>
<b>Planning Recommendations</b>
<p>The PRA and PAS reports together provide an appropriate ecological baseline for the purposes of assessing the Planning Application. No further surveys would be required.</p>

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background to Survey

The property under consideration is the dwelling known as Veronica Lodge which is situated on a hillside at the western edge of Hugh Town on St Mary's in the Isles of Scilly.

The proposed works involve comprehensive renovation of the existing property.

A Preliminary Roosting Assessment (PRA) was carried out in August 2025 - this assessment identified Low Potential for use by roosting bats.

The PRA report stated that a further PAS survey would be required to provide an evidence base sufficient to identify the status of the building with regards to bats, and inform any mitigation measures required to ensure legislative compliance. This PAS report provides the results of the recommended survey. It should be read alongside the PRA report to provide a comprehensive assessment of the building with regards to roosting bats.

## 1.2. Survey Objectives

In accordance with the Best Practice Guidance<sup>1</sup> for a Low Potential building, the structure was subject to a single PAS survey with two surveyors and two Night Vision Aid (NVA) cameras positioned to cover all aspects of the property where suitable features for use by roosting bats were identified.

The overall objective is to provide a comprehensive ecological baseline upon which to assess the potential impact of the proposed works to roosting bats.

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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

## **2. Survey Methodology**

### **2.1. Surveyor Details**

The surveys were led by Darren Hart. Darren has undertaken Professional Bat Licence training and is a Level 2 Licensed Bat Worker with experience in undertaking emergence, re-entry and activity surveys.

Additional surveyors are experienced in undertaking emergence and re-entry surveys and worked under the supervision of the Licensed Bat Worker.

The NVA review, assessment and reporting were completed by James Faulconbridge, trading as IOS Ecology. James is a Level 2 Licensed Bat Worker with over 15 years' experience in undertaking ecological assessments to support Planning and Development.

### **2.2. Survey Methodology**

The dusk emergence survey was conducted following Best Practice methodology for bat surveys.

The PAS survey was carried out on the evening of 4<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

The dusk emergence survey commenced from approximately 15 minutes before sunset and continued until 90 minutes after sunset. The survey was undertaken with regard for the appropriate weather conditions ( $\geq 10^{\circ}\text{C}$  at sunset, no/light rain or wind).

Frequency division bat detectors were used to detect and record all bat passes. The surveyor recorded metadata including the time the pass occurred, the behaviour observed (foraging/commuting) and the species of bat observed. Results from the bat detector recordings were analysed using BatSound/Analook sonogram analysis computer software.

Two NVAs were used to provide comprehensive coverage of the potential access or roosting features – these were two Nightfox Whisker infra-red cameras with additional infra-red torches. Footage from these NVAs was watched back to verify or update the survey results confirmed in the field.

### **2.3. Survey Validity and Update**

Bats are transient in their use of habitats such as these, and apparently minor changes in condition or use of the building can affect suitability. However, in the absence of significant changes in condition or building use, the nature and character of the site suggest that the results of the PAS surveys can be considered proportionately valid to support a Planning Application or works under Permitted Development rights until the next active season in August 2026.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Surveyor Positions

In order to ensure that the building received a survey effort of a single bat survey for a Low Potential building (in line with the Best Practice Guidance), two surveyor positions each with an NVA were deployed. These are identified in Map 01 below.

The outbuildings were identified as providing Negligible Potential for use by roosting bats and were not subject to direct observation during the PAS.



**Map 01** – showing the surveyor positions (S1 – S2).

### 3.2. PAS Survey

#### 3.2.1. Survey Conditions

The dusk survey was undertaken on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2025. The survey commenced at 7:49pm, approximately 15 minutes before sunset at 8:04pm. It was completed at 9:34pm.

The temperature at the beginning of the survey was 17°C dropping to 16°C by the end - the evening had patchy high cloud with a moderate breeze but the site itself occupies a sheltered position. The evening was dry.

### 3.2.2. Survey Results - Emergence

No emergence activity was recorded during the survey.

### 3.2.3. Survey Results - Activity

No species other than common pipistrelle bats were identified during the survey.

The surveyor positioned at S1 recorded a bat arriving onto the site from the north at 8:26pm, approximately 22 minutes after sunset. This bat was subsequently recorded by S2 who observed brief foraging behaviour before the bat continued offsite to the west. Further foraging was recorded from 8:30pm onwards with bats seen to arrive from offsite in each instance. There was little further activity recorded by the surveyor in position S1 after this point, but the surveyor in position S2 recorded intermittent foraging to the west of the property until the end of the survey.

## 3.3. Limitations and Constraints

### 3.3.1. Seasonal Timing

The survey was undertaken within the main active season in 2025 – this conforms with the recommended survey timings within the Good Practice Guidelines.

### 3.3.2. Survey Conditions

The weather conditions were suitable with no other adverse conditions which might be expected to affect bat behaviour.

### 3.3.3. Visibility and Coverage

The surveys were comprehensive with regards to surveyor visibility.

### 3.3.4. NVA Footage

The NV camera Field of View (FOV) covered key areas under survey and allowed cross-reference of records in some instances to confirm the flight paths of bats picked up by both surveyors. Coverage was not comprehensive – this was due to the presence of intervening vegetation and restrictions on access/vantage points which did not affect surveyor visibility but precluded comprehensive FOV for the NVA equipment. The footage obtained is however considered sufficient to confirm the conclusions of the surveyors that no bats emerged from the property during the survey. See Appendix 2 for example screenshots from the footage.

## **4. Mitigation Strategy**

### **4.1. EPSML Requirement**

The project does not require a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) to proceed.

### **4.2. Precautionary Method of Works**

As individual bats can be exploratory or make transient use of roosting opportunities, it is important that contractors undertaking the proposed works are aware of the low risk for bats to be encountered - works should therefore proceed with appropriate caution and vigilance.

A Precautionary Method of Works (PMW) is outlined in Appendix 1 of this document and should be followed by contractors undertaking works.

### **4.3. Timing of Works**

#### **4.3.1. Bats**

The results of the PRA/PAS surveys do not indicate that there is a requirement for seasonal constraints on the timing of works with regards to bats.

#### **4.3.2. Nesting Birds**

Assessment of potential for nesting birds, and appropriate mitigation measures, are provided in the PRA report. These recommendations are not repeated here, for brevity, but remain valid and should be addressed in any appropriate Planning Conditions and work practices.

### **4.4. Habitat Enhancement / Mitigation**

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

If the applicant wished to provide enhancement measures, the installation of a bat box on the western side of the property would have a good likelihood of occupation. An open-based box design would ensure that it would not require cleaning. The location and aspect would be optimal for bats such as common pipistrelle which is the dominant species present on the island and the most likely species to use the environs for foraging and roosting.

A suitable box could be purchased or constructed following freely available plans. Kent Bat Box style boxes are slim and easy to construct from appropriate timber using the plans provided at:

<http://www.kentbatgroup.org.uk/kent-bat-box.pdf>



## Appendix 1 - Precautionary Method Statement with regards to Bats

The purpose of this Method Statement is to ensure that proposed 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 existing buildings**. The generic recommendations relating to each type of feature are outlined below – locations where these features occur are listed in the PRA report:

#### **Fascias/Soffits**

There are intermittent gaps where the fascias and soffits meets the wall on the outbuilding. Where these are to be removed or impacted as part of the proposed works, they should be carefully removed and the gaps behind exposed in such a way that, in the unlikely event that bats are present, they are not injured or killed by the action.

Once these areas are fully exposed, they can be visually inspected by contractors. Any cavities exposed by this action should also be carefully inspected and features dismantled by hand where necessary until absence of bats can be confidently confirmed.

#### **Roof Tiles**

If any ridge or roof tiles are lifted or damaged on either the main property or the outbuildings, they should be removed carefully and the undersides inspected in such a way that, in the unlikely event that bats are present, they are not injured or killed by the action.

- Lift the tile in a controlled manner, supporting it as it clears the battens;
- Check the tile's underside and the immediate void below for bats or signs such as droppings, staining, scratch marks;
- Remove adjacent tiles one at a time with extra care; avoid dragging tiles across gaps and check for bats or signs of bat presence as above;
- Proceed with works if no bats or signs are observed, maintaining vigilance.

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

If bats are identified or suspected, 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 – NVA Screenshots



**NVA1** – showing a screenshot from the Nightfox Whisker at position S1 with the front (eastern aspect) of the property and a portion of the northern aspect (RHS) covered by the FOV.



**NVA2** – showing footage from the Nightfox Whisker on position S2 with the southern aspect of the property covered by the FOV. The position along the sightline of the western aspect would allow the identification of bats flying from this location.