Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) & Nesting Bird Assessment

Site:

Watch House, Tresco, Isles of Scilly, UK, TR24 0PW

Grid Reference: SV 89283 15745

14th April 2025

Version 1

Plan for Ecology Ltd
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Document Control:

Site Name:	Watch House, Tresco, Isles of Scilly, UK, TR24 0PW
OS Grid Reference:	SV 89283 15745
Report Author:	Dr Kim Jelbert BSc (Hons), MSc, PhD, MCIEEM; bat licence no: 2015-10444-CLS-CLS; Registered Consultant: RC224; BER0205 WML-CL47 (Annex A & B); Barn owl licence no. CL29/00037; Dormouse license no: 2016-22394-CLS-CLS.
Client:	Tresco Estate
Report Reference Number:	P4E3792
Version:	01
Date:	14th April 2025

Declaration:

"The information, evidence and advice, which I have prepared and provided is true, and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management's (CIEEM) Code of Professional Conduct. I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional bona fide opinions."

Kim Jelbert	[redacted]	

Report Lifespan:

Ecological features can change over time, particularly if site management/ use changes. At the time of writing, Local Planning Authorities typically consider Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) and Nesting Bird Assessments to be valid for 12 months (until March 2026), unless stated otherwise.

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Non-Technical Summary

Bat Evidence or Potential Roost Features?	The desk study returned zero records for granted bat European Protected Species (EPS) licences within a 2km radius of the site. However, Natural England's spatial map (MAGIC) has recently been updated, and bat licence records appear to have been omitted from the current version. The author is aware of several bat roosts within a 2km radius of the site including maternity and day roosts for common pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and day roosts for brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*). These records do not relate to the site itself. Watch House was visually inspected for evidence of roosting bats on 18th March 2025 (exterior) and 19th March 2025 (interior). All parts of the building were accessible and could be fully inspected, except for the first-floor roof void, which was only partially accessed. No evidence of roosting bats was found within the interior of the building, but a small number of external features with potential to support roosting bats were observed. Watch House was assessed as being of **'moderate suitability'** for roosting bats; however, the proposed works are confined to the ground floor (demolition and replacement of the single storey glazed sunroom, and construction of a small single storey extension). No works are proposed within the vicinity of the first floor and the observed potential roost features (PRAs) (gaps beneath the first-floor timber fascia boards), therefore, impacts resulting from the proposed development on roosting bats (if present) are considered highly unlikely to occur. No further surveys for bats are recommended to inform the planning application or proposed works.
Bat Mitigation Recommendations	**No further surveys for bats are recommended.** Precautionary recommendations are provided. There is opportunity to enhance the value of the site for bats post-development by incorporating a bat box(es) on the exterior of the modified building.
Bird Evidence or Potential Nesting Opportunity?	No evidence of nesting birds was observed within the building, but it is possible that house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) nest beneath the first-floor timber fascia boards between March – August/ September. The property was assessed as being of value **'within the Zone of Influence'** for nesting birds. The building was assessed as being of **'negligible suitability'** for barn owl due to the absence of this species from the Isles of Scilly and lack of suitable access points.
Bird Mitigation Recommendations	**No further surveys for birds are recommended.**

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	A precautionary approach must be adopted. If an active bird nest is uncovered, works within at least 5m of the nest must stop immediately (as soon as it is safe to do so) and be delayed until nesting activity has ceased. Works are most likely to be delayed between April and July. There is opportunity to make provision for nesting birds' post-development by incorporating bird boxes on the exterior of the building. Provision of a bird box has potential to enhance the value of the site for birds' post-development.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background & Objective of Assessment

Charlie Hewitt, on behalf of Tresco Estate, commissioned Plan for Ecology Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) and Nesting Bird Assessment of Watch House, Tresco, Isles of Scilly, TR24 0PW (OS Grid Ref: SV 89283 15745) in March 2025. The client proposes to demolish and replace the single-storey glazed sunroom on the southern elevation and construct a single-storey extension on the north elevation. A PRA and Nesting Bird Assessment is a detailed inspection of the exterior and interior (where access is available) of a structure to look for features that bats and birds could use for entry/ exit, roosting (bats) or nesting (birds), and to search for signs of bats and birds. The objective of the survey is to determine the actual or potential presence of bats and nesting birds, and any requirement for further survey and/or mitigation to inform the development proposals.

1.2 Site Location & Description

Watch House is located at Old Grimsby on the east coast of the island of Tresco, Isles of Scilly. The site comprises a single detached holiday property set within gardens, bounded by a minor road to the north and located *c.* 10m west of Old Grimsby Beach to the east (Fig. 1).

Figure 1: Aerial view of Watch House, Tresco (red outline).

1.3 Proposed Site Plans

The client proposes to demolish and replace the single-storey glazed sunroom on the southern elevation and construct a single-storey extension on the north elevation. An excerpt of the proposed site plans showing the areas to be impacted are shown in Figure 2, below.

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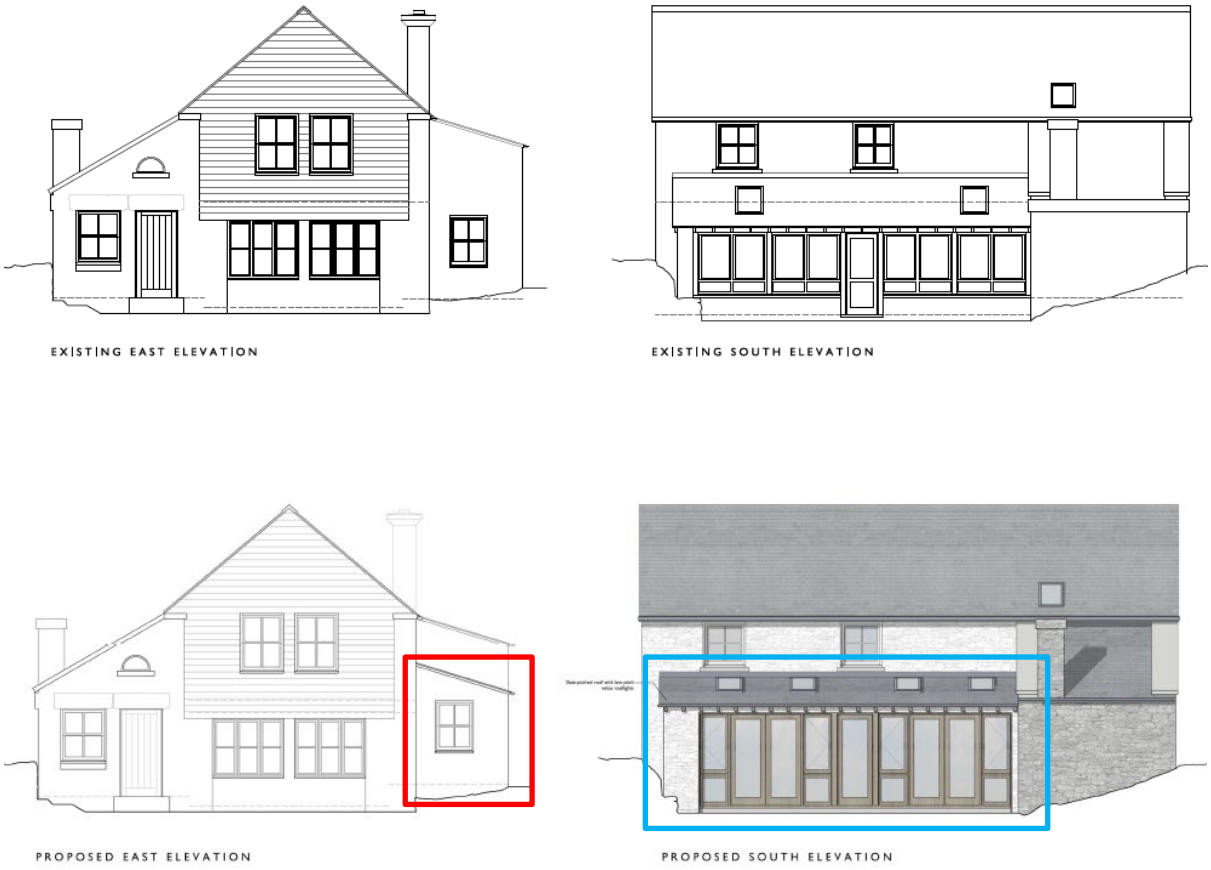

Figure 2: Excerpts from the existing plans (top) and proposed plans (bottom) showing the areas to be impacted by the proposed development. Red outline shows the proposed single-storey extension on the north elevation. Blue outline shows the proposed replacement sunroom on the south elevation.

1.4 Project Administration

Property Address:	Watch House, Tresco, Isles of Scilly, UK, TR24 0PW
OS Grid Reference:	SV 89283 15745
Client:	Charlie Hewitt on behalf of Tresco Estate
Planning Authority:	Council of the Isles of Scilly
Planning Reference Number:	Unknown
Report Reference Number:	P4E3792
Proposed work:	Demolition and replacement of sunroom and proposed single storey extension.
Survey Date:	18th & 19th March 2025

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Ecologist & Licence Number:	bat licence no: 2015-10444-CLS-CLS; Registered Consultant: RC224; BER0205 WML-CL47 (Annex A & B); Barn owl licence no. CL29/00037; Dormouse license no: 2016-22394-CLS-CLS

1.5 Legislation & Planning Policy

Planning: The local planning authority has a statutory obligation to consider impacts upon protected species resulting from development. Planning permission will not be granted with outstanding ecological surveys, and if applicable an appropriate mitigation plan.

Bats: In the UK all bat species are listed on Annex IV(a) of the European Communities Habitats Directive and as such are European Protected Species (EPS). In Britain protection of bats is achieved through their inclusion on Schedule 2 of the Conservation and Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (HM Government, 2019)), Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 12 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (HM Government, 1981, 2000, 2017).

As a result of this statutory legislation it is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat/s in its roost;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a bat roost (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time);
- Possess or sell or exchange a bat (dead or alive) or part of a bat.

Works with potential to cause significant disturbance to roosting bats may require a European Protected Species (EPSL) licence, Bat Mitigation Class Licence (CL21) or Bat Earned Recognition Class Licence (WML-CL47) from Natural England before works can legally commence. Works likely to result in less significant disturbance may be carried out under a Bat Mitigation Method Statement. The magnitude of disturbance and, therefore, the requirement for an EPSL, Bat Mitigation Class Licence, Bat Earned Recognition Class Licence or method statement is assessed on a case-by-case basis by the bat ecologist. The Bat Mitigation Method Statement or appropriate licence application must be prepared and/or applied for by a suitably experienced and licenced bat ecologist. Where planning permission is required, the appropriate licence cannot be obtained until planning permission has been granted.

Birds: In Britain the nests (whilst in use or being built) and eggs of wild birds are protected against taking, damage and destruction under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (HM Government, 1981). The barn owl (*Tyto alba*) is listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (HM Government, 1981); this legislation makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally capture, injure or kill a barn owl;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a barn owl whilst nesting;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a dependent young barn owl.

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2.0 Methodology

2.1 Desk Study

The desk study is a search of records of granted bat European Protected Species (EPS) licences within a 2km radius of the site shown on Natural England's MAGIC website https://magic.defra.gov.uk/. A desk study search for barn owl (and other bird species) has not been undertaken.

2.2 Field Survey

The ecologist (Kim Jelbert) assessed the suitability of the building on-site and the surrounding habitat to support bats and birds on 18th March (exterior) and 19th March 2025 (interior). The site is defined as the building outlined red shown in Figure 1 above.

A high-power torch was used to illuminate all accessible areas of the building with potential to support roosting bats and roosting/ nesting birds. The ecologist searched for signs of bats including droppings, fur oil staining, urine staining, feeding remains, audible squeaking, bat-fly (Nycteribiid) pupal cases and odour; and for field signs of current use by nesting birds and barn owls, including liming, pellets, moulted feathers and signs of barn owl nesting (e.g. presence of adult or juvenile barn owls, eggs or egg fragments, nest debris and moulted feathers and down) and other bird species nests. Weather during the survey was in line with seasonal norms.

The assessment was carried out in accordance with the 'Bat Survey for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines' produced by the Bat Conservation Trust (Collins, 2023).

2.3 Ecological Evaluation

Potential bat roosts identified during the visual inspection of the building were categorised as to their suitability in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023) as detailed in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Categorisation of bat roost suitability in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023).

Suitability Category	Description
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats at any time of year.
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
Low	A structure with one or more features with potential to support individual bats opportunistically at any time of year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts such as maternity or 'classic' hibernation roosts.

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Defining and recording use by barn owl during the visual inspection of the building is categorised in accordance with Shawyer (2011) as detailed in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Categorisation of barn owl use.

Category	Description
Potential Nest Site (PNS)	Features with a hole of at least 80mm diameter or vertical slot of this width backed by a sufficiently large and dark chamber with a floor area normally greater than 250mm x 250mm.
Active Roost Site (ARS)	A place where breeding does not occur, but where the bird is seen or heard regularly, or its current or recent presence can be recognised by signs such as liming, pellets or moulted feathers. Regularity and timing of use is indicated by amount of evidence and its age.
Temporary Rest Site (TRS)	Small amounts of liming, pellets or moulted feathers beneath a perch indicative of occasional use.
Occupied Breeding Site (OBS)	A place where breeding is taking place or has done so in the recent past as indicated by the presence of a breeding pair with nest debris, eggs, egg shells, chicks or down present.

*Barn owl is understood to be absent on the Isles of Scilly, but an assessment was still undertaken, given the mobile nature of such species, and its presence in the UK and Europe.

2.4 Limitations

All parts of the property were accessible and could be searched for evidence of use by bats and birds. The first-floor roof void (void 2) was only partly inspected because the void is shallow in height and thick insulation covers the joists. Approximately 4m^2 could be fully accessed, the remainder of the roof void was viewed from a distance using a torch. The roof and upper parts of the building were viewed from ground level; it is possible that some potential roost features (PRFs) are present at height that were not visible from the ground.

There are no limitations associated with weather conditions.

2.5 Technical Competence

All survey work, reporting and mitigation recommendations have been undertaken by Kim Jelbert BSc (Hons) MSc PhD MCIEEM who hold the following protected species licences: bat licence no: 2015-10444-CLS-CLS; Registered Consultant: RC224; BER0205 WML-CL47 (Annex A & B); Barn owl licence no. CL29/00037; Dormouse license no: 2016-22394-CLS-CLS. Kim has 19 years of experience as an Ecological Consultant and has held many Natural England mitigation licences for bats including for rarer species such as greater and lesser horseshoe bats.

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3.0 Assessment Results

3.1 Site Description & Habitat Suitability

Watch House is located at Old Grimsby on the east coast of the island of Tresco, Isles of Scilly. The site comprises a single detached holiday property set within gardens, bounded by a minor road to the north and located *c.* 10m west of Old Grimsby Beach to the east (Fig. 1). The location is semi-rural and residential in character. Neighbouring holiday properties with gardens adjoin the site to the south; a small access road adjoins the site to the west, north and east with the beach at Old Grimsby immediately (*c.* 10m) to the east. The site is not located within a designated site of Nature Conservation Importance; however, a number of designated sites are located within a 1km radius of the property. These include the Isles of Scilly Complex Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Pentle Bay, Merrick and Round Island Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Castle Down SSSI and Great Pool SSSI. The site is located within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone. A detailed assessment of impact upon designated sites is beyond the scope of this assessment, however, given the minor nature of the proposals, impacts on nearby designated sites are considered likely to be negligible.

Habitats in the wider area comprise predominantly coastal habitats, heathland, pasture grazed by cattle with pockets of mixed woodland, gardens, and rural settlements. Buildings in the wider area comprise a mixture of period properties with vegetated gardens, outbuildings and barns. In combination, these features provide potential high-quality foraging and roosting habitat for bats, and suitable nest sites, roosts and foraging habitat for birds.

3.2 Desk Study

The desk study search (undertaken on 23rd March 2025) revealed zero records for granted bat European Protected Species (EPS) licences within a 2km radius of the site. However, Natural England's spatial map (MAGIC) has recently been updated, and bat licence records appear to have been omitted from the current version. The author is aware of several bat roosts within a 2km radius of the site including maternity and day roosts for common pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and day roosts for brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*). These records do not relate to the site itself.

3.3 Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA)

The visual assessment of the exterior of the building was undertaken on 18th March 2025. An interior inspection was undertaken on 19th March 2025. The combined assessment details the suitability of the building at Watch House for roosting bats (Fig. 1).

Watch House is a detached stone-built holiday property (Figs. 3-5). A single-storey stone-built projection with slate roof is present on the south elevation (Fig. 3 and 5), together with a glazed, slate roofed sunroom (the latter is proposed for demolition and replacement, Fig. 5). A two-storey stone-built projection with slate roof is present on the north elevation (Fig. 4). All door and window apertures comprise painted timber. Black uPVC rainwater goods are present throughout the building. The main roof is finished in slate with concrete ridge tiles (Fig. 3 – 5).

Internally, the property supports a single roof void above the stone-built single-storey projection on the south elevation (void 1) (Fig. 6). Void 1 is lined with bitumen and supports rolled insulation between the joists (Fig. 6). The slatted vent on the east elevation creates a draughty and partially lit internal environment (Fig. 6). No evidence of roosting bats was observed within void 1. The sunroom lacks a roof void. A single large but shallow void runs the length of the property above the first floor (void 2) (Fig. 7). The slate roof tiles are lined with taught bitumen; rolled insulation

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is present between the joists. No evidence of roosting bats was observed within void 2. Access was limited to within 4m^2 of the loft hatch, but it was possible to inspect the remaining roof void with a torch from a distance.

Externally, the roof and ridge tiles appear to be tight throughout with no potential bat access points or roosting locations (i.e., gaps beneath lifted, broken or slipped tiles). Timber fascia boards are present at first floor level throughout the property (Fig. 3 – 5). All first-floor fascia boards feature gaps with potential to support roosting bats or permit bats access to the first-floor roof void (void 2) (Fig. 3 – 5). A timber slatted vent is present on the east elevation of the stone-built single-storey projection on the south elevation (Fig. 3, 6). The vent provides suitable bat access to void 1; however, no evidence of roosting bats was found within the roof void (void 1); no building works are proposed in this location. There are no potential bat access points within the vicinity of the single-storey sunroom (Fig. 5).

Watch House was visually inspected for evidence of roosting bats on 18th March 2025. All parts of the building were accessible and could be fully inspected, except for the first-floor roof void (void 2), which was only partially accessed. No evidence of roosting bats was found within the interior of the building, however, a small number of external features with potential to support roosting bats were observed.

Watch House was assessed as being of **'moderate suitability'** for roosting bats; however, the proposed works are confined to the ground floor (demolition and replacement of the single-storey glazed sunroom, and construction of a small single-storey extension, Figs. 2 - 4). No works are proposed within the vicinity of the first-floor and the observed potential roost features (PRAs) (gaps beneath the first-floor timber fascia boards), therefore, impacts resulting from the proposed development on roosting bats (if present) are considered highly unlikely to occur. **No further surveys for bats are recommended to inform the planning application or proposed works.**

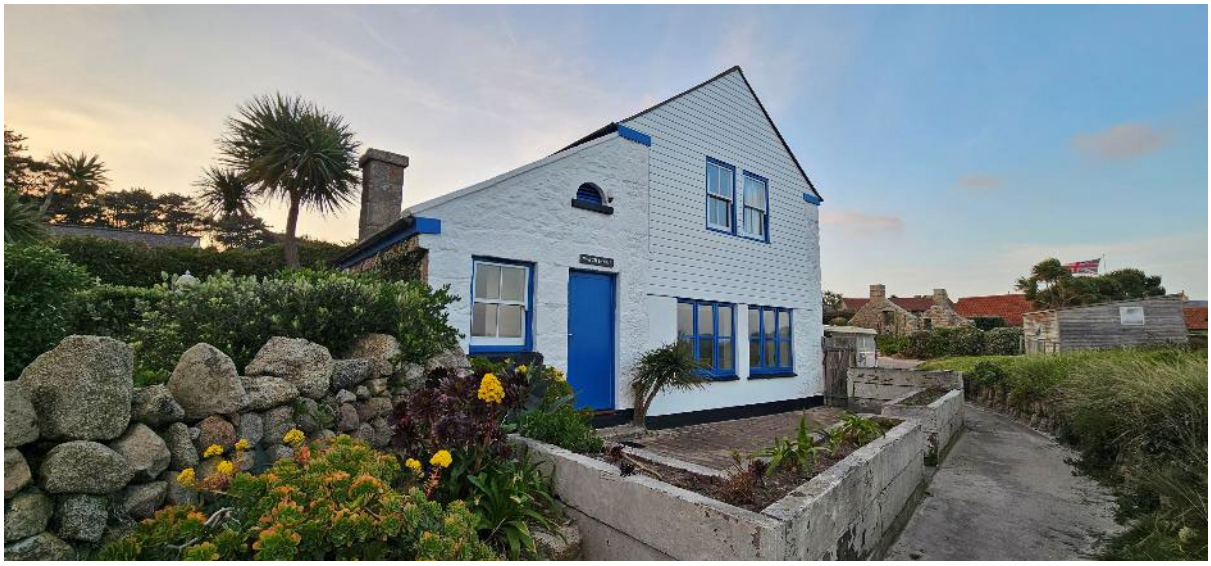

Figure 3: East elevation of Watch House showing the single storey mono-pitched projection off of the southern elevation.

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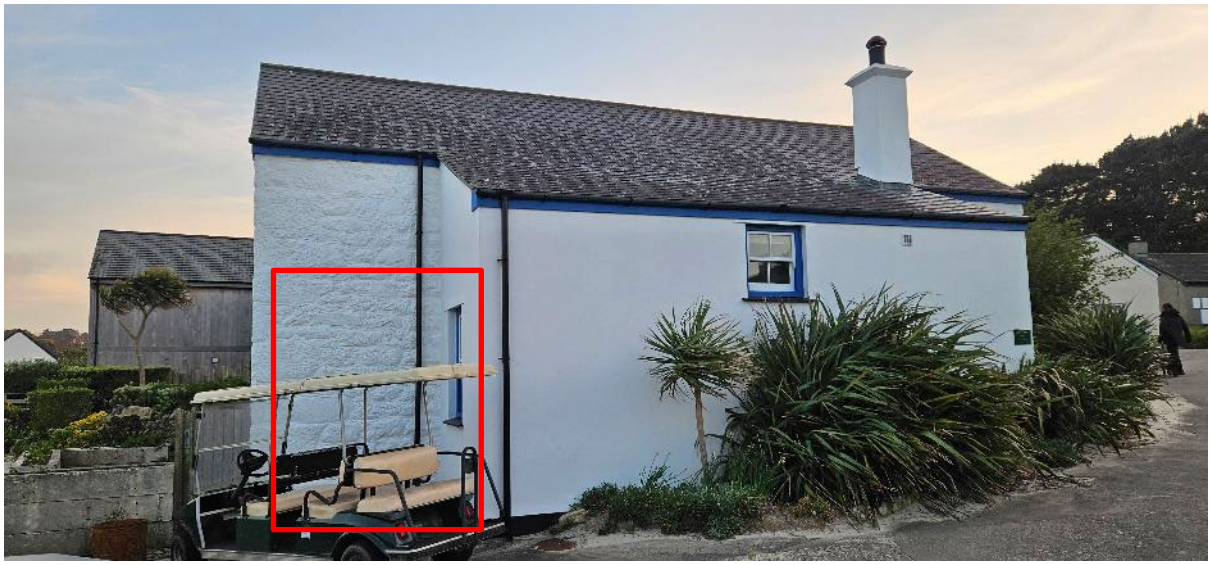

Figure 4: North elevation of Watch House; red open rectangle shows the proposed location of the single storey extension. Blue timber fascia boards above the first-floor height support a 20mm gap beneath but will not be impacted by the proposals.

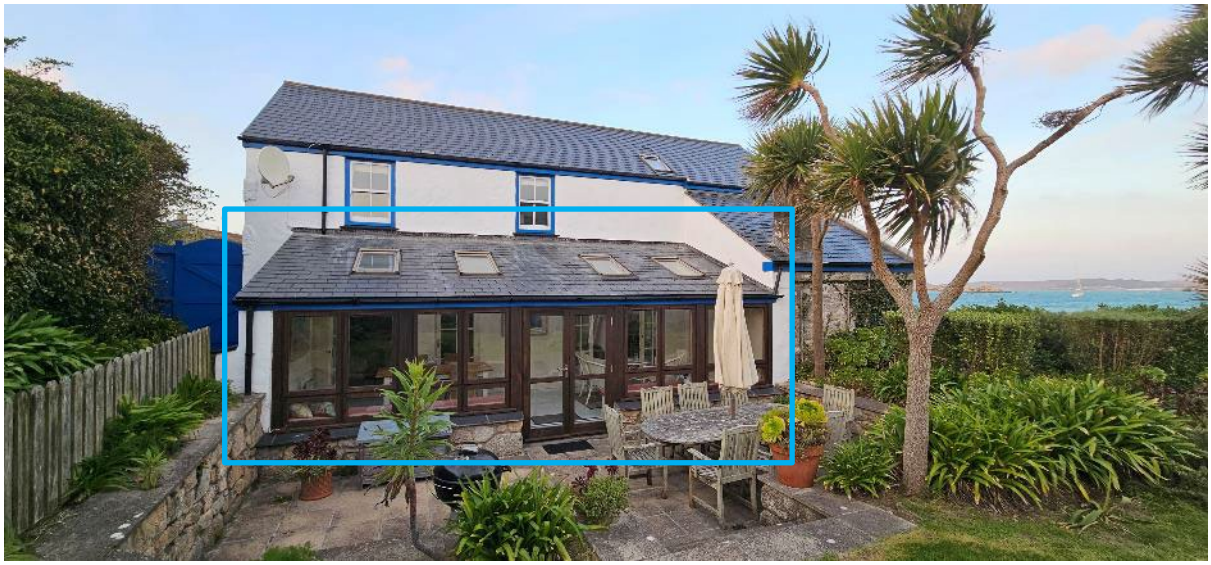

Figure 5: South elevation of Watch House showing the slate roofed sunroom (blue open rectangle) to be demolished and replaced with a replacement sunroom.

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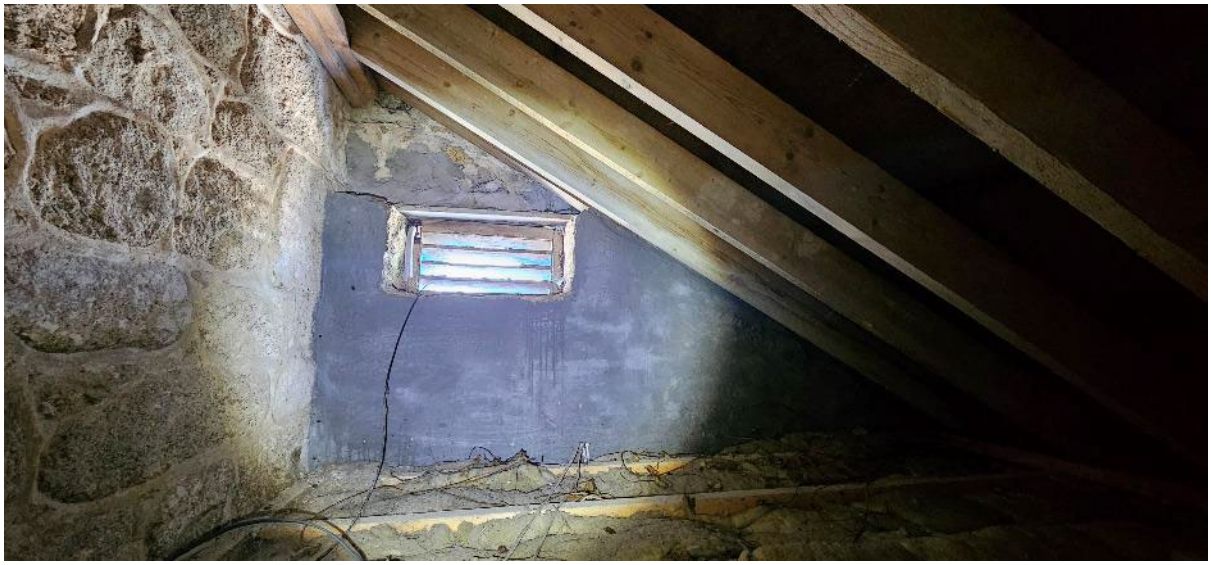

Figure 6: Roof void 1 interior showing vent on east elevation.

Figure 7: Roof void 2 interior (view east).

3.4 Bird Assessment

No evidence of nesting birds was found on the exterior or within the interior of the building, but it is possible that house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) nest beneath the first-floor timber fascia boards between March – August/ September. The property was assessed as being of value **'within the Zone of Influence'** for nesting birds.

No evidence of barn owls using the building was noted and there are no suitable access points for barn owl, which is understood to be absent on the Isles of Scilly. The property was assessed as being of **'negligible suitability'** for nesting, breeding or resting barn owls.

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4.0 Mitigation Recommendations

4.1 Bat Mitigation

The property 'Watch House' was assessed as being of **'moderate suitability'** for roosting bats; however, the proposed works are confined to the ground floor (demolition and replacement of the single-storey glazed sunroom, and construction of a small single-storey extension, Figs. 2 - 4). No works are proposed within the vicinity of the first floor and the observed potential roost features (PRAs) (gaps beneath the first-floor timber fascia boards), therefore, impacts resulting from the proposed development on roosting bats (if present) are considered highly unlikely to occur. **No further surveys for bats are recommended to inform the planning application or proposed works.**

The building contractors should be made aware that bats can roost unseen within the building structure. If, during works, a bat(s) is uncovered, the bat must not be handled, and works must stop immediately (as soon as it is safe to do so). Advice must be sought from an experienced bat ecologist (Plan for Ecology Ltd: 01326 218839) or Bat Conservation Trust (Tel: 0345 1300 228). In this scenario, it may be necessary to undertake further survey work and subsequently obtain a bat licence from Natural England before works are permitted to resume. See Section 1.5 for relevant legislation.

If the proposed works are altered to include work to the roof void above the first floor (void 2) of the property, or if works to the first-floor fascia boards are required, then it will be necessary to consult the project ecologist in the first instance and likely undertake two bat emergence surveys. In line with the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023), bat emergence surveys can only be undertaken between May and September. Emergence surveys must be spaced at least three weeks apart and at least one of the surveys must be carried out between May and August. The surveys will determine if bats are present and, if so, the species, number of individuals, bat access points and timings of usage.

4.2 Bird Mitigation

No evidence of nesting birds was observed during the survey.

Although no evidence of nesting birds was found, a precautionary approach should be adopted. If, during construction works, an active bird nest is uncovered (regardless of the time of year), works within at least 5m of the nest must stop immediately (as soon as it is safe to do so) and delayed until nesting activity has ceased. Works are most likely to be delayed between April and July.

No further surveys for birds are recommended as part of this assessment.

4.3 Opportunities for Biodiversity Enhancement

Net gain is described as a measurable target(s) for development projects where impacts on biodiversity are outweighed by the mitigation hierarchy approach to first avoid, and then minimise, impact including through restoration and/ or compensation (Baker *et al*., 2019). Biodiversity net gain is an approach to development, and/or land management, that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand.

The value of the site for nesting birds' post-development could be enhanced by installing at least one bird box on the exterior of the modified building. Bird boxes should be located at least 2m above ground level and on a north or east facing elevation. Recommended products include house sparrow boxes and swift boxes.

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The value of the site for roosting bats could be enhanced by installing at least one bat box on the exterior of the modified building. Bat boxes should be installed at least 4m above ground level and on a south or west facing elevation, and away from any potential light spill from external lighting or windows. Recommended products include Green and Blue's bat block, 2FE Schwegler's wall mounted bat shelter, 1FE Schwegler bat access panel with back plate and the Lela bat box.

The value of the site for invertebrates could be enhanced by installing a bee brick within the proposed sunroom, at height of approx. 1m, or bee posts within sunny parts of the garden of the property. Plan for Ecology Ltd can provide detailed recommendations upon request. NB: suitable products are available from www.nhbs.com, www.wildcareshop.com and www.greenandblue.co.uk.

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