PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

PARK HOUSE,
HUGH TOWN, ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY

Client: *CoIOS*

Our reference: *25-1-1*

Planning reference: *Produced in advance of submission*

Report date: *9th February 2025*

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IOS Ecology

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**. Other structural features within the building have a low potential to support roosting bats. Whilst a negligible potential is concluded with regards to the areas of the structure to be impacted, it is noted that there is a small chance of opportunistic/transient use of individual discreet features associated with the tiles. This potential, when considered alongside the minimal scale of proposed impacts, is not sufficient to justify further surveys, 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.[1]
Bats – Further Survey Requirements
No further surveys are recommended – the PRA conclusion does not require further information with regards to bats in order to inform a planning application.
Bats – Recommendations
Residual risk can be controlled through a Precautionary Method Statement (PMW) when undertaking specified works – this is provided in Appendix 1. Measures to ensure that structural features with potential to support roosting bats remain undisturbed may be required depending on the schedule of works. This includes fascias, hanging tiles and lifted flashing on the northern aspect which are not affected directly by the proposals. Care must be taken when removing tiles to install the fire vent in the roof and, if there are lifted tiles in this location, a licensed bat worker should undertake ecological oversight of the removal. More generally, standard good practice and vigilance should be observed by the contractors undertaking the works. A Planning Condition requiring compliance with the PMW 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
No obvious nesting habitat for breeding birds was identified associated with the property, though there is potential for individual bird species to find isolated opportunities if the structural condition of the property were to change.
Nesting Birds - Recommendations
Contractors undertaking the works should be vigilant to the potential presence of nesting birds if conditions change between the time of the survey and the commencement of works.

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

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

Planning Authority:	**Location:**	**Planning Application ref:**
Isles of Scilly	SV 90353 10502	Report produced in support of application

Planning application address:

Park House, The Parade, Hugh Town, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly

Proposed development:

The proposals for the property were outlined in the DAS and should correspond with the details included in the Planning Application submitted alongside this report. These are detailed below, and those which are considered to have potential to impact on roosting bats are identified in bold:

- Installation of three new windows in existing door locations;
- Replacement of the existing glazed front door with a heritage-style entrance door;
- Use of patterned/obscured glass for bathroom and bedroom windows as required;
- Installation of ventilation grilles for bathrooms;
- **Addition of an automatic opening fire vent on the roof**;
- **Implementation of internal fire barriers in the roof space**;
- Creation of a dedicated bin storage area;
- Provision of cycle parking spaces.

Building references:

The building is identified in the plans provided in Appendix 2. The main two-storey property, identified in the Plan as 'Park House, is distinguished from the 'Mono-Pitch' section to the north and the 'Flat Roof' section to the south.

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 30th January 2025 in accordance with relevant Best Practice methodology[2].

Local and Landscape Setting:

The property is located within Hugh Town; the Parade runs immediately to the north with Ingram's Opening to the west. The immediate southern and eastern boundaries comprise adjacent buildings under private ownership or staff accommodation outside of the scope of the assessment.

The central location 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 300m to the west and around

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

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 lying just beyond the road to the north-east; and the grassed area adjacent to Porthcressa Beach lying 35m to the south. Both of these areas are dominated by close-mown amenity grassland with ornamental planting, reflecting their popularity with visitors and their 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.

The desk study did not reveal any records of bats recorded roosting within the building historically. Five species of bat have been 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 and are likely associated with vagrant or migratory individuals. Six records of common pipistrelle roosts are identified in relatively close proximity to the property – these relate to individual bats utilising features such as hanging slates around dormer windows or gaps behind fascias within Hugh Town to the east as well as small maternity and non-breeding summer roosts.

Building Description(s):

The following description will provide an overview of the construction and structural condition of the property with a focus on features which, by their design or condition, could provide suitable roosting opportunities for bats.

The main property is a two-storey building with a hipped projection from the main gable roof. This is identified on the plan in Appendix 2 as Park House. A single-storey mono-pitch section to the north is also identified, along with a single-storey flat-roof component to the south.

Park House

The main structure has exposed granite blockwork on the northern aspect whilst the remaining aspects are rendered. Throughout the property, the pointing or wall covering is in good condition with no gaps or cracks noted. Windows and sills throughout the property appear to be well fitted with no gaps between the frames and their apertures.

There are hanging tile sections on the northern aspect, primarily between the windows. Some minor gaps were noted between these but these appear to be too small and superficial to support roosting bats. Where there is lifted flashing at the apex of these hanging tiles however, there is minor potential for use by individual bats on a transient basis.

Boxed soffits are generally well-sealed, with a single pipe hole which could potentially provide access to roosting opportunities on the eastern side of the hipped projection. A small gap behind the uPVC fascia is also noted on the south-eastern corner. The uPVC soffit on the northern aspect is generally well -fitted with very minor gaps in places. There is some evidence of gaps being filled with expanding foam visible.

The roof is of interlocking concrete tiles which are occasionally lifted or have minor gaps beneath, especially in the northern pitch and within the hipped projection. The ridge is largely well-pointed with individual minor gaps on the northern aspect only – these may be superficial. Solar panels occupy a portion of the southern pitch to the west of the hipped projection. Guttering runs close to the eaves on all relevant aspects of the property which would preclude the potential for a direct fly-in access.

The roof tiles overhang the wall on the gables though there is no associated fascia or soffit.

Minor gaps in the verge pointing are present on the southern edge of the western gable.

Internally, the roof is built around a modern timber truss structure with nail-plate joints which preclude gaps between the wood. No ridge is present. The loft space has breeze-block gable walls which are generally well-pointed although minor gaps occur. The terminal timbers appear generally tightly fitted against these walls, precluding potential roosting opportunities.

The loft space has insulation between the joists and is largely unfinished though used for long-term storage. A central section is boarded with plasterboard and a panel floor. The well-lapped felt is in good condition throughout the majority of the roof space, though occasional tears were noted. In places, evidence of replacement of the felting was noted.

No internal evidence of bats was recorded, though some evidence of rodents was confirmed.

Single-Storey Mono-pitch

The single-storey element on the northern aspect of the property is comprised of exposed granite blockwork which appears to be well-pointed.

Hanging tiles are present on the gables – these are generally well-fitted but gaps occur at the base in places, and where the fascia overlaps the top of the tiles.

The roof itself is felted and appears well-fitted and in good condition.

Flat-Roof

The single-storey flat-roof component of the property on the southern aspect is well-rendered throughout with well-fitted windows and a well-sealed roof with no gaps or other roosting opportunities noted.

Summary

Potential roosting features associated with the property can therefore be summarised as:

- Minor gaps in lifted flashing at the apex of hanging tiles on the northern aspect.
- Minor gaps in uPVC soffit on the northern aspect.
- Minor gaps in verge pointing on the southern edge of the western gable.
- Access to the southern soffit through a single pipe hole on the eastern side of the hipped projection.
- Small gap behind the uPVC fascia on the south-eastern corner.
- Occasional gaps beneath lifted interlocking tiles, particularly on the northern pitch and hipped projection.
- Individual minor gaps in ridge pointing on the northern aspect.
- Gaps at the base of hanging tiles on gables of the single-storey mono-pitch structure.
- Gaps where fascia overlaps the top of hanging tiles on the single-storey mono-pitch structure.

Survey Limitations

The profile of the roof precluded access for internal inspection for droppings or other evidence of bats closer to the eaves due to the spatial constraints, though these areas were inspected from a close distance.

Some aspects of the property could not be observed directly at height, for example gaps in the soffits or pointing on the verge.

No other limitations to the scope of the PRA were noted.

Assessment of Potential for use by Roosting Bats

No evidence of current or historic use by bats was identified during the survey. There are a number of features which could potentially provide roosting opportunities for bats, but the majority of these would not be impacted by the proposed works.

The two key components of the proposed works which would affect areas where bats may roost are the installation of internal fire barriers within the loft space; and the installation of the fire vent in the roof.

- **Fire Barriers** - no evidence of roosting bats was identified within the loft space, with any potential roosting opportunities present above the underfelting which would ensure that they would not be directly impacted by the construction of the fire barriers within the loft.
- **Fire Vent** - the installation of the fire vent would directly impact the roof itself, but in a very small area proportional to the overall span. It is not considered that this minor work would reach the level of risk that would necessitate further surveys, when compared with the potential of the features to support bats. Rather this risk could be controlled by a Precautionary Method of Works (PMW).

Whilst the building overall is considered to have a Low Potential to support individual roosts of common bat species, there is a **Negligible Potential** associated with those features which would be directly impacted by works.

This assessment of potential takes into account:

- The characteristics of the potential roosting features noted;
- The absence of any evidence of occupation by bats;
- The central location of the property within the highly built-up area of Hugh Town with abundant equivalent features on other buildings in the immediate environs.

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.

Residual risk can be controlled through a Precautionary Method of Works (PMW) – this is detailed in **Appendix 1** of this report and includes:

- Measures to ensure that structural features with potential to support roosting bats remain undisturbed may be required depending on the schedule of works. This includes fascias, hanging tiles and lifted flashing on the northern aspect which are not affected directly by the proposals.
- Care must be taken when removing tiles to install the fire vent in the roof and, if there are lifted tiles in this location, a licensed bat worker should undertake ecological oversight of the removal.
- More generally, standard good practice and vigilance should be observed by the contractors undertaking the works. The potential for individual common pipistrelle bats to make use of minor opportunities associated with identified features should be taken into account during 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 1 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 bats.

In consideration of the absence of impacts to potential roosting features; the position of the property within Hugh Town, and the ongoing works by the client to the adjacent Town Hall which will include the incorporation of multiple bat boxes as a form of enhancement, it is not recommended that additional boxes are installed in this instance.

Assessment of Potential for use by Nesting Birds

No obvious nesting sites for use by breeding birds were identified associated with the property itself; however there is potential for unusual nest sites to be used in locations such as the minor niches associated with the structure. Examples would include the pipe entry into the soffit.

The areas of the structure which could theoretically support nesting birds are however not those which would be impacted by the proposed works.

Recommendations and Justification (Birds):

Contractors undertaking the works should be vigilant to the potential presence of nesting birds if conditions or opportunities change between the time of the survey and the commencement of works.

In order to ensure legislative compliance, the contractors undertaking the works must ensure that nesting birds are not disturbed in accordance with requirements under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981).

Survey Validity and Update

The data supporting this PRA are considered to provide an appropriate baseline for a planning application submitted within 12 months from the date of survey.

It is recommended that if there are significant changes in building condition, or if a Planning Application is not submitted by February 2026, then an updated walkover survey should be undertaken in order to identify any changes in the ecological assessment of the Site and update/amend the assessment accordingly.

APPENDIX 1
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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.*

Construction activities, including installation of 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 structural components of the building**.

There is low potential for individual bats to use transient roosting opportunities beneath minor gaps behind fascias, hanging tiles and lead flashing around the property. These are listed individually in the report and should be identified during site walkover prior to works commencing.

Care should be taken during works to ensure that these structures are not disturbed, obstructed, or damaged. This may include a contractor briefing to ensure that those working on the property 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 **where bats are most likely to be found in respect to the property:**

Lifted Tiles

If there are any areas of damage such as lifted tiles or missing pointing within 1m of the location of the Fire Vent installation, then it is recommended that the removal of the tiles is overseen by a Licenced Bat Worker. This is in order to ensure that, in the unlikely event of a bat being identified, they can be captured and moved to a place of safety. As a guideline, any hole or crack which is more than ½" wide should be considered to have potential to support a roosting bat.

Any tiles should be removed carefully, by hand, in such a way that in the unlikely event that a bat is present beneath, they are not crushed or harmed by the action. The underside of the tile should be checked carefully to ensure no bats are clinging to the underside before being set aside.

Once all tiles are removed in this manner, works in this area can proceed without further constraint.

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 main Park House structure indicated by the red wash with the monopitch roof indicated to the front in the blue wash; and the flat-roof component to the rear indicated by the green wash.

Photograph 1: Showing northern frontage and western gable of the property.

Photograph 2: Showing the southern aspect and western gable of the property.

Photograph 3: Showing the flat roof component present on the southern aspect of the property.

Photograph 4: Showing the eastern gable of the property with the mono-pitch roof structure visible on the northern frontage.

Photograph 5: Showing the location of the missing pointing on roof verge of the western gable

Photograph 6: Showing an example of the minor cavities present on the northern aspect where fascias overtop hanging tiles

Photograph 7: Showing the southern aspect of the property – an example if lifted tiles is indicated by the upper arrow - whilst the lower arrow identifies the pipe hole in the soffit on this aspect.

Photograph 8: Showing the interior of the loft space – the breeze block gable wall can be seen with the timber truss framework in the foreground.