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PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

BISHOPS VIEW,
ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY

Client: *Mark Wright*

Our reference: *25-6-6*

Planning reference: *Produced in advance of submission*

Report date: *2nd July 2025*

Author: *James Faulconbridge BSc (Hons), MRes, MCIEEM*

[redacted]

Executive Summary

Bats – Results and Findings
The preliminary roost assessment (PRA) survey of the structures directly impacted by the proposals concluded that there is **low potential** for use by bats.
Bats – Further Survey Requirements
The following recommendations are outlined in the report in order to provide a suitable baseline to inform Planning and to ensure that no Protected Species are negatively impacted as a result of the proposed works: • **One further Presence/Absence Survey (PAS)** should be undertaken on the relevant aspects of the building to characterise and assess the potential use of the roof structures by bats to meet the standard of survey required by Best Practice Guidance to support a Planning Application.

Nesting Birds – Results and Findings
There was no evidence of nesting birds recorded within the building; however there are opportunities which may be suitable for some species such as house sparrow associated with the eaves.
Nesting Birds - Recommendations
Works should take account of the potential for species such as sparrow to make use of nesting opportunities during the breeding season. There is no requirement to replace nesting habitat for breeding birds as no nesting habitat would be lost. If the applicant wishes to provide biodiversity enhancement, nest boxes for common bird species could be erected in the garden or on the buildings.

Other Ecological Receptors
No further ecological impacts relevant to planning are identified.

Report Status
As the requirement for PAS surveys is identified in accordance with the Best Practice Guidance, this report **does not provide a comprehensive baseline to inform Planning** until these surveys have been completed and their results used to inform appropriate mitigation measures.

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

Planning Authority:	**Location:**	**Planning Application ref:**
Isles of Scilly	SV 91192 11733	Report produced in support of application

Planning application address:

Bishops View, Porthloo Lane, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly

Proposed development:

The proposed works were identified by the client and should accord with the documentation submitted in support of the application. These involve:

- The addition of a second-storey element to an existing single-storey component of the property including tying into the main two-storey roof.

The following assessment takes into account both the potential direct impacts to the structure (e.g. removal of the existing single-storey roof) and the indirect impacts (e.g. disturbance to adjacent features which may support roosting bats).

Building references:

The building is 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 26th June 2025 in accordance with relevant Best Practice methodology[1].

Local and Landscape Setting:

The property is situated towards the north-western portion of the island of St Mary's, between Porthloo and Telegraph. It is a detached property separated from other immediately proximate development. The property is set within a garden including a lawn, a pond and flower beds with boundary hedgerows.

The land to the north and north-west is occupied by St Mary's Golf Club. This area is dominated by grassland, with minor areas of scrub and trees though the character of this golf course is less intensively manicured than many which can be found on the mainland, resulting in the provision of a higher quality of habitat for species including bats.

The remaining landscape surrounding the property is a series of agricultural fields under various management including flower growing, pasture and arable as well as disused land which is not under active cultivation. These are frequently separated by typical windbreak species hedgerows providing good connectivity through the landscape.

There is a pine shelter belt running immediately to the north of the property on the boundary of the property, which continues both north-west and south-east – this represents a relatively unusual stand of mature trees within the local environs though it is not strongly connected with other wooded habitat.

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

There are no bat roosts recorded within 500m of the site – the closest roost record relates to a common pipistrelle roost just over 500m away in McFarland's Down to the north.

Building Description(s):

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

Building Overview

The relevant area of the property is a single-storey element which would be raised to a two-storey height through the addition of a first floor room. This would tie in with the main roof of the property to create an en-suite bathroom.

Single Storey Component

The single-storey component is rendered externally to a high standard with no gaps or cracks noted.

The roof is tiled with synthetic slate tiles with no gaps noted associated with the roof or ridge tiles. Minor lifted sections are superficial and do not offer suitable roosting features due to the nature and dimensions of the tiles. Hanging tiles on the upper gable appear to be similarly well-sealed.

There is potential access for bats via gaps at the eaves of the building on the eastern aspect which are too wide to provide roosting features in their own right, and lack a terminal apex for a crevice-dwelling species such as common pipistrelle, but would provide potential access to roosting features associated with the loft space.

The loft void is sealed but was previously accessed during a PRA survey in 2023 prior to renovation works. At this time it was confirmed that the roof was built around a timber-truss framework - there is no ridge present and the roof is under-felted throughout in good condition. Rodent droppings were noted. No evidence of bats was identified, but the restrictions on access to the void represented a constraint to survey.

There is flashing at the valley where this pitched roof ties into the main roof – this was well-sealed and in good condition.

Main Roof

The main roof has been recently constructed with dry-laid slate tiles which are in excellent condition with no gaps or potential access points noted on this aspect.

The upper floor is built into the roof space; there is therefore no void at the location where the proposed first-floor extension roof would tie in.

The eaves of this roof are well-sealed with no gaps noted; as are the soffits at the gable.

Summary

Potential roosting features associated with the aspects of the property which would be directly or indirectly impacted by the proposals can therefore be summarised as:

- Roosting opportunities associated with the roof structure which could be accessed via the gap behind the fascia on the eastern aspect of the single-storey building.

Survey Limitations

The following limitations on survey were noted:

- The sealed void within the single-storey roof could not be accessed for inspection as it was sealed;

- There are locations within the building where evidence of bats, if present, would not have been apparent from a PRA survey, such as roosts associated with the wall plate; beneath roof tiles; or within the sealed void.

These limitations and constraints are taken into account when concluding the assessments of building potential and are addressed by the recommendations for further surveys.

Assessment of Potential for use by Roosting Bats

The single-storey component roof is considered to have **Low Potential** to support roosting bats – this takes into account:

- The nature and character of the roosting opportunities identified;
- A previous PAS survey in 2023 which did not identify any roosting bats associated with the property;
- Constraints on survey due to the lack of access to inspect the sealed void;
- The position of the building in relative isolation in the landscape, but directly backing onto the pine tree line.

The main roof is considered to have **Negligible Potential** to support roosting bats in the location where the new roof would tie in. The absence of a void would preclude the risk of an impact to this aspect of the roof having an indirect impact on a central roost which is accessed from another aspect as would be the case if a loft space were affected.

This judgement was reached in accordance with the survey methodologies and evaluation criteria outlined in the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines[2].

If roosts are present associated with the structure, uncontrolled works have the potential to destroy roosts and kill/injure bats occupying the roosts at the time of work.

Recommendations and Justification (Bats):

In accordance with the criteria outlined in the Best Practice Guidance, one Presence/Absence Survey (PAS) would be required to provide an appropriate evidence-base upon which to support a planning application.

The purpose of the PAS technique is to allow the relevant aspects of the building to be watched at dusk to observe bats emerging from concealed roosting locations. This uses the predictable emergence behaviour of bats to allow their presence to be detected in roosting locations which cannot be directly visually inspected.

The PAS surveys should be led by Licensed Bat Worker(s) between May and September. The survey would require one surveyor in order to achieve a comprehensive view of the relevant features and should be supported by use of an infra-red or thermal imaging camera along the eastern aspect.

These surveys should be completed and submitted in support of a Planning Application in accordance with the guidance provided by Circular 06/05 (ODPM, 2005) which states that "*it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision*".

For the avoidance of doubt, the current survey baseline is not sufficient to support a Planning Application with reference to the Circular 06/05.

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

If no bats are identified emerging/returning to the building then the results would be incorporated into a PAS report which, submitted alongside this PRA report, would form a suitable ecological basis to support a Planning Application.

If bats are identified emerging from the building, further surveys would be required to fully characterise the roost and provide sufficient evidence of Protected Species to inform a Planning Application.

Assessment of Potential for use by Nesting Birds

No evidence of nesting birds was identified associated with the property; however access at the eaves of the single-storey building may allow species such as house sparrow to find nesting opportunities within the building.

Care should be taken to ensure that no birds are nesting prior to works taking place. This could be achieved either through timing of works, or a pre-commencement inspection.

Recommendations and Justification (Birds):

Timing of Works

Works affecting the roof should be undertaken outside of the breeding season which runs from March – September inclusive, where practicable. This would provide the most robust means of avoiding risk of impact to nesting birds.

Pre-commencement Inspection

If this is not possible, then contractors should visually inspect the work area internally and externally before they are affected by the works, in order to confirm that no nests are present. In the unlikely event that a bird nest is present, it must be left undisturbed until chicks have fledged the nest, at which point works can proceed.

Care must also be taken to ensure that the works do not cause disturbance or damage to proximate nesting areas through indirect impacts including vibration, noise or contractor presence. This includes adjacent parts of the building, as well as vegetation within the garden, boundary hedges or offsite pine plantation.

Enhancement Opportunities

There is no requirement to mitigate for loss of nesting habitat for breeding birds as no nesting habitat would be removed; 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. Boxes associated with the pine trees to the east would have a good chance of occupation.

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.

APPENDIX 1
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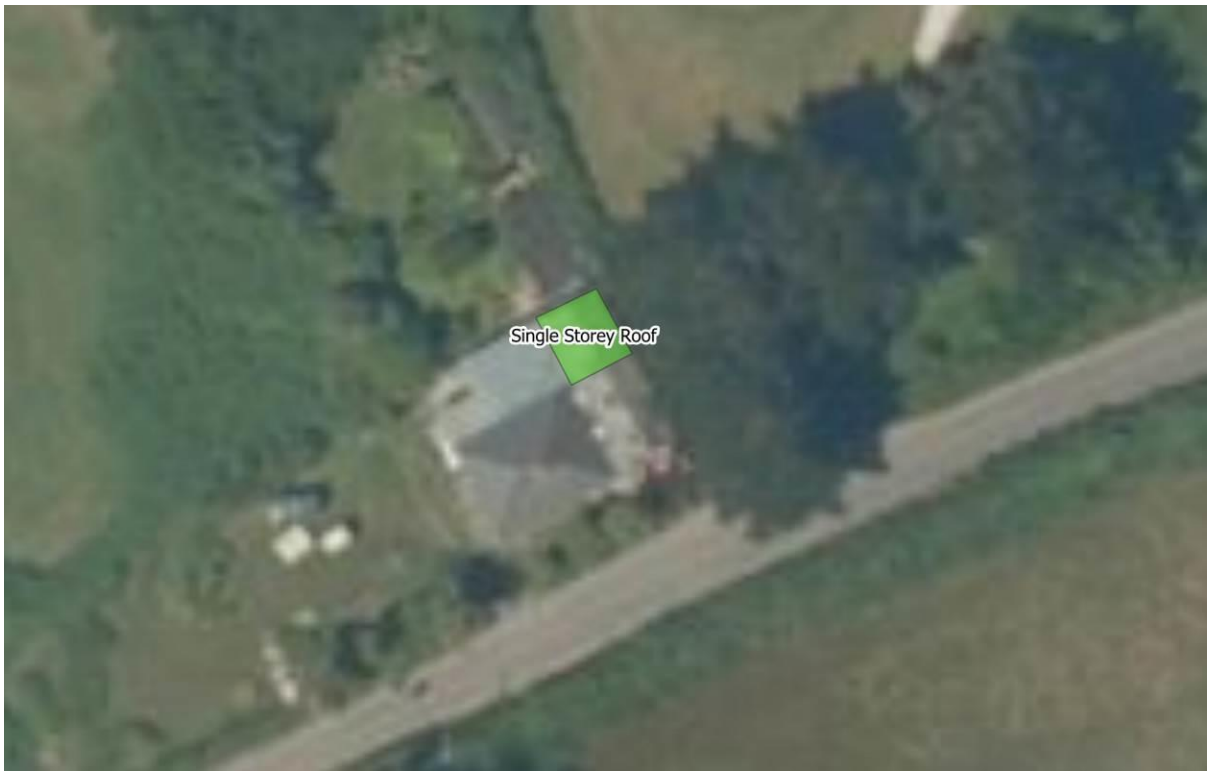
LOCATION PLAN AND PHOTOGRAPHS

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



Map 02 – Showing the relevant component of the property. Note that the main roof into which the extension would be tied is to the south but is not reflected in this image due to the recent nature of the construction which is not depicted on the aerial imagery.

Photograph 1: Showing the single-storey pitched roof section which would be extended to a second storey.

Photograph 2: Showing the well-sealed valley between the single-storey roof and the existing main pitched roof into which it is tied

Photograph 3: Showing the hanging tiles on the upper gable of the single-storey section – these are well-sealed at the base

Photograph 4: Showing the gaps behind the fascia on the eastern aspect of the single-storey section

Photograph 5: Showing the tightly fitted dry-laid slate tiles of the main roof into which the new extension would be tied.

Photograph 6: Showing the interior room of the single-storey section – the sealed void is in the roof space above this.