

## PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

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LOWENVA,  
CHURCH ROAD, ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY



*Client: Adrian Metson*

*Our reference: 26-2-2*

*Planning reference: Produced in advance of submission*

*Report date: 17<sup>th</sup> February 2026*

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# Executive Summary

## Bats – Results and Findings

The preliminary roost assessment (PRA) survey concluded that there was **low bat roosting potential** in relation to the structures to be impacted by the proposed works.

This judgement was reached in accordance with the survey methodologies and evaluation criteria outlined in the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 4<sup>th</sup> edition.

## Bats – Further Survey Requirements

The following recommendation is provided in order to ensure a suitable baseline to support a Planning Application, ensure legislative compliance and to avoid negative impacts to Protected Species:

- **One further Presence/Absence Survey (PAS)** should be undertaken on the property to characterise and assess the potential use of the roof structures by bats in order to meet the standard of survey required by Best Practice Guidance.

## Nesting Birds – Results and Findings

There was no evidence of nesting birds recorded within the building; however there are discrete opportunities which may be suitable for some species such as house sparrow.

## Nesting Birds - Recommendations

Works should take account of the minor residual risk of species such sparrow making 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.

## PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

<b>Planning Authority:</b> Isles of Scilly	<b>Location:</b> SV 90807 10459	<b>Planning Application ref:</b> Produced in advance of submission
<b>Planning application address:</b> Lowenva, Church Road, Hugh Town, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly		
<b>Proposed development:</b> The proposed works were identified through the plans submitted to Planning and viewed on the Planning Portal. These include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Replacement of roof and gable wooden shingles with a modern roof covering, and timber cladding on the gables.</li></ol>		
<b>Building references:</b> The building is 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 12 <sup>th</sup> February 2026 in accordance with relevant Best Practice methodology <sup>1</sup> .		
<b>Local and Landscape Setting:</b> The building is located to south-eastern end of Hugh Town, where the land rises and the character of the housing becomes more widely spaced with larger gardens in contrast to the more tightly spaced buildings which characterise the main town. The property itself is set within a garden plot dominated by a garden lawn, with pittosporum hedging on some of the boundaries but largely open to the south and west. The land use immediately surrounding the building is residential development on all sides, with associated gardens, roads, hardstanding and access features. Beyond the residential edge of the town, there is abundant suitable habitat to the east. Approximately 180m to the east is Lower Moors SSSI – a topogenous mire with areas of elm woodland and scrub as well as a series of pools and marshy grassland. Records from the Local Bat Group indicate that this is an important foraging resource for bats on the island. Small-scale agricultural fields and associated trees and hedge lines occur to the east. A common pipistrelle day roost was confirmed in the adjacent property in 2024 – this roost supported two bats under a fascia on the gable end. There are three further records of bat roosts within 500m of the property – all relate to common pipistrelle roosts utilising features such as hanging slates around dormer windows in Hugh Town to the west and south-west of the site.		

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

### **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 property is a detached bungalow constructed of reconstituted stone blocks which are in good condition. The roof and gables (above eaves height) are clad in timber shingles.

The main cavity walls are in good condition with no access gaps noted externally. The wooden window and door frames are well-fitted and no gaps were noted.

The boxed soffits on both the eaves and the gable have occasional gaps where they are imperfectly cut to the irregular blockwork of the wall. Larger gaps are present at the terminus of these soffits on the corners of the property. These gaps were inspected with a video endoscope and no evidence of bats was noted but there is potential for use by roosting bats either within the boxed soffit itself, or within features associated with the wall plate which are accessible through these access features. Guttering was attached to the eaves soffits only.

The roof itself is constructed around a timber truss framework with timber shingles attached directly to wooden battens with no insulation or underfelting. Despite the inherent suitability of the material for roosting bats, the characteristics of the shingles mean that there are no suitable cavities between them, nor beneath them. There are minor cavities created by the intersection of timbers at the gable walls within the loft space, but these were found to be relatively open and well cobwebbed at the time of survey indicating no current or recent occupation by bats. There is a timber ridge board present.

The loft space is used for storage and was clean and tidy – no evidence of bats or other species such as mouse were identified.

#### *Summary*

Potential roosting features associated with the property are identified as:

- Gaps behind the soffits at the gable and eaves which might provide roosting opportunities in their own right, or provide access to roosting opportunities associated with the wall plate.

### **Survey Limitations**

There are locations where the structure of the building would preclude direct or comprehensive inspection for use by roosting bats, including features associated with the wall plate.

There were no further 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 though an overall **low potential** was determined.

This assessment takes into account the features present and the constraints to a comprehensive inspection, as well as the confirmation of a roost within an adjacent property in 2024.

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

In accordance with the criteria outlined in the Best Practice Guidance<sup>2</sup>, the following surveys would be required to provide an appropriate evidence-base to support a Planning Application:

- 1x Presence/Absence Survey (PAS).

The purpose of the PAS technique is to allow 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 inspected.

The PAS surveys should be led by a Licensed Bat Worker between mid-May and mid-September. A minimum of two surveyors with Night Vision Aid (NVA) cameras would be required to cover the relevant features and allow the results of the surveys to be reviewed and confirmed in accordance with the Best Practice Guidance.

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.

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**

House sparrows have the potential to nest in features associated with the soffits of the property, although no evidence of historic nesting was identified at the time of survey. Additional minor opportunities may be found elsewhere on the structure, or within the associated garden.

In accordance with the precautionary principle, the roof of the building should be considered to provide **suitable habitat** for use by nesting birds.

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

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).

#### *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.

Early or late nesting attempts by species such as collared dove may occur during the winter period and vigilance must be maintained by contractors irrespective of seasonal timing. The

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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

offence defined in the legislation is absolute; active nests cannot be damaged or destroyed at any time of year.

#### *Pre-commencement Inspection*

If the recommended timing of works 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 – specifically in the gaps within the soffits. In the 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 features within the garden.

#### *Enhancement Opportunities*

The installation of communal nest boxes supporting species such as house sparrow or other common garden bird species could secure enhancement for nesting birds. Consideration would need to be given to the location and aspect of these boxes to minimise disturbance and risk of predation, as well as avoid nuisance to residents.

Boxes should be mounted on the wall 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 the property within the local environs (red circle). Reproduced in accordance with Google’s Fair Use Policy.



**Map 02** – Showing the building (red). Reproduced in accordance with Google’s Fair Use Policy.



**Photograph 1:** Showing the building the south-east



**Photograph 2:** Showing the shingles on the gable ends of the property – the boxed soffits with minor gaps can be seen



**Photograph 3:** Showing the gap at the corner of the property providing access to the boxed soffit



**Photograph 4:** Showing an example of the minor gaps in the boxed soffits where they meet the wall.



**Photograph 5:** Showing the roof structure with ridge board visible. The shingles are attached directly to the battens.



**Photograph 6:** Showing the apex of the interior gable – an example of the locations where minor gaps are present are indicated.