

# PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

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## OUTBUILDING AT GREEN PASTURES, MCFARLAND'S DOWN, ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY



*Client:* Nicholas Bright

*Our reference:* 2021/02

*Planning reference:* P/21/064/HH

*Report date:* 27<sup>th</sup> August 2021

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## Executive Summary

### Bats – Results and Findings

The preliminary roost assessment (PRA) survey concluded that there was **negligible potential** for use of the outbuilding by bats. This assessment relates solely to the outbuilding at Green Pastures rather than the residential property itself.

This judgement was reached in accordance with the survey methodologies and evaluation criteria outlined in the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 3rd edition.<sup>1</sup>

### Bats – Further Survey Requirements

No further surveys are recommended – the PRA conclusion of negligible potential does not require further survey information with regards to bats in order to inform a planning application.

### Bats – Recommendations

It is not recommended that any Planning Conditions are required with regards to bats in relation to the proposed demolition of the outbuilding assessed in this report.

Standard good practice and vigilance should be observed by the contractors undertaking the demolition works in acknowledgement that bats are transient in their use of roosting opportunities and may explore potential locations. Recommendations to ensure legislative compliance are provided in Appendix 2.

### Nesting Birds – Results and Findings

The survey did not identify any suitable nesting habitat for breeding birds associated with the outbuilding.

### Nesting Birds - Recommendations

There is no requirement to replace nesting habitat for breeding birds as no suitable features are identified in the outbuilding.

If the applicant wishes to provide biodiversity enhancement, nest boxes could be erected on the new building, or associated with the existing dwelling and residential garden. Guidance on suitable specifications is provided.

### Other Ecological Receptors

No further ecological impacts relevant to planning are identified.

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<sup>1</sup> Collins, J. (ed.) 2016 Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3<sup>rd</sup> edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

## APPENDIX 1 – PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

<b>Planning Authority:</b> Isles of Scilly	<b>Location:</b> 91255(E) 12288 (N)	<b>Planning Application ref:</b> P/21/064/HH
<b>Planning application address:</b> Green Pastures, McFarland's Down, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly		
<b>Proposed development:</b> <p>The proposed works were identified by the client on site at the time of survey and accord with the documentation submitted in support of the application. These involve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The demolition of the existing outbuilding;</li> <li>2) The erection of a new residential structure.</li> </ol>		
<b>Building references:</b> <p>The outbuilding is set within the rear garden of the property Green Pastures and is identified in the plans provided in Appendix 3.</p>		
<b>Name and licence number of bat-workers carrying out survey:</b> <p>James Faulconbridge (2015-12724-CLS-CLS)</p>		
<b>Preliminary Roost Assessment date:</b> <p>The visual inspection was undertaken on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2021 in accordance with relevant Best Practice methodology<sup>2</sup>.</p>		
<b>Local and Landscape Setting:</b> <p>The outbuilding at Green Pastures is situated within the residential area of McFarland's Down to the north-west of St Mary's in the Isles of Scilly.</p> <p>The land to the west, directly accessible from the garden of the property, is largely open with a mix of agricultural and pasture land with areas of heathland and coastal grassland on the approach to the shoreline. To the east is an area of mature coniferous tree cover which extends north towards the shore. The property is bounded on both the northern and southern aspects by further residential properties with associated amenity gardens.</p> <p>A common pipistrelle roost was recorded within McFarland's Down in 2014 in a garage, with further transient/day roosts recorded associated with properties to the east.</p>		
<b>Building Description(s):</b> <p>The Outbuilding is a single-skinned one-storey structure set within the residential garden of Green Pastures. It is rendered inside and out – this render is in good condition throughout. Windows are present on the northern aspect only – these are uPVC and are well fitted with no gaps or cavities associated. The door on the eastern aspect is set within a wooden frame – this is well fitted. The roof is a single-pitch sloping roof formed of corrugated sheets. There are occasional minor gaps where the sheets overlap but there is negligible potential for bats to</p>		

<sup>2</sup> Collins, J. (ed.) 2016 Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3<sup>rd</sup> edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

utilise such features due to their size and position within the roof. Any minor gaps present were observed to be well-cobwebbed at the time of survey which supports this assessment. There is guttering affixed on the northern aspect – this effectively blocks direct fly-in access to gaps under the ridges of the corrugated sheets from this side. The sheets are well-pointed on their junction with the walls on all other aspects with no cavities noted externally. The fascia board to which the guttering is attached is generally tightly fitted, though above the windows there is a gap offering direct access up and into the building interior. This is the only location where potential internal access was identified but the feature is not considered to represent a roosting opportunity in its own right.

Internally the outbuilding is used for storage and appeared to be in routine use being clean and tidy. A careful inspection did not identify any droppings or other evidence of use by bats, and the internal conditions indicated that such a search could be considered comprehensive. There is no loft or roof void and the corrugated sheets were affixed directly to the timber roof structure. Occasional minor gaps were observed where the roof timbers meet the adjacent walls, though these gaps were sporadic and well-cobwebbed indicating no recent use by mammals including bats.

No evidence of current or historic use by bats or nesting birds was identified during the survey.

### **Survey Limitations**

There were no limitations on access or visibility which would affect the results of the survey.

### **Assessment of Potential for use by Roosting Bats**

It is considered that the outbuilding provides **negligible potential** for use by roosting bats.

### **Assessment of Potential for use by Nesting Birds**

It is considered that the outbuilding provides **negligible potential** for use by nesting birds.

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

No further surveys are recommended – the conclusion of **negligible potential** does not require any further information with regards to bats in order to inform a planning application.

It is not recommended that any Planning Conditions are required with regards to bats in relation to the proposed demolition of the outbuilding.

Standard good practice and vigilance should be observed by the contractors undertaking the demolition works in acknowledgement that bats are transient in their use of roosting opportunities and may explore potential locations. Recommendations to ensure legislative compliance are provided in Appendix 2.

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

There is no requirement to mitigate for loss of nesting habitat for breeding birds; however if the applicant wished to provide biodiversity enhancement measures, this could be achieved through the erection of bird boxes on the new structure, or associated with the existing residential property or garden.

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.

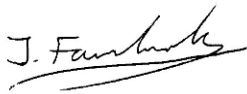
Boxes can be sourced online, or can be constructed on site using methodology and specifications provided by the RSPB:

**Sparrows:** <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/give-nature-a-home-in-your-garden/garden-activities/createasparrowstreet/>

**Other Species:** <https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-families/family-wild-challenge/activities/build-a-birdbox/>

**Signed by bat worker(s):**

**Date:** 27<sup>th</sup> August 2021

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Fairbanks', with a horizontal line drawn underneath the name.

## APPENDIX 2

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### PRECAUTIONARY METHOD STATEMENT WITH REGARDS TO BATS

The purpose of this Method Statement is to ensure that demolition 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 demolition 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 given building structures:

There is a negligible risk of bats making transient use of minor cavities between corrugated roofing sheets. These sheets should be removed individually and by hand, taking care to lift directly upwards such that in the highly unlikely event of a bat being present, they are not crushed by the removal of the sheet.

There is a negligible risk of bats being present internally in crevices between the timber roof structure and the adjacent walls. Where possible, the roof timbers around the edges of the structure should be removed by hand and with care.

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 3

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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 Outbuilding (blue) which was subject to the survey. The residential property of Green Pastures is shown in red – this was not subject to survey as part of this assessment.





**Photograph 1:** Showing the outbuilding in context with the gable-end of the main residential property (Green Pastures) to the left.



**Photograph 2:** Showing the guttering attached to the fascia board on the northern aspect – this fitting effectively blocks direct fly-in access to the gaps in the corrugated roof sheets.



**Photograph 3:** Showing the gap beneath the fascia board on the northern aspect where it passes above the window, potentially allowing internal access to the outbuilding.



**Photograph 4:** Showing the tight fit between the fascia and the wall at all locations except above the windows.



**Photograph 5:** Showing the interior of the building with the timber roof structure visible.



**Photograph 6:** Showing the landscape setting of the outbuilding (photograph taken from beside the building facing north-west across the residential garden).