PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

REAR ROOF PITCH OF SAMSON HOUSE, PORTHLOO, ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY

Client: *Richard Hand*

Our reference: *22-1-1*

Planning reference: *Produced in advance of submission*

Report date: *18th January 2022*

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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 north-western roof pitch of Samson House by bats. This assessment relates solely to the location of the proposed dormer window. It does not provide a comprehensive assessment of the building in question. It is noted that adjacent features, including the existing dormer, the soffit and the fascia on the western gable provide **low potential** roosting features for individual bats. These features should not be directly impacted by the proposed works either during construction or following completion, but are included in this assessment as measures would be required to ensure there is no disturbance or accidental damage during the installation of the dormer. 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 [1]
Bats – Further Survey Requirements
No further surveys are recommended – the PRA conclusion 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 dormer installation works assessed in this report. Standard good practice and vigilance should be observed by the contractors undertaking the works in acknowledgement that bats are transient in their use of roosting opportunities and may explore potential locations. This includes measures to avoid disturbance or accidental damage to adjacent structural features which have potential to support roosting bats. 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 north-western pitch of the roof or adjacent structural features.
Nesting Birds - Recommendations
There is no requirement to replace nesting habitat for breeding birds as no suitable features are identified in the western pitch of the roof or adjacent structural features.

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

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

APPENDIX 1 –
PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

Planning Authority:	**Location:**	**Planning Application ref:**
Isles of Scilly	90994(E), 11300 (N)	Report produced in support of application

Planning application address:

Samson House, Porthloo, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly

Proposed development:

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

1) The installation of a dormer window in the location of an existing Velux window in the north-western roof pitch of Samson House

Building references:

The roof section in question is identified in the plans provided in Appendix 3.

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 13th January 2022 in accordance with relevant Best Practice methodology[2].

Local and Landscape Setting:

The property is situated to the east of the boatyard in Porthloo on the western coast of St Mary's. The property is a part of a small collection of residential properties with associated garden areas. The coastline is in close proximity to the west with open countryside comprising mixed land use within small hedge-lined fields to the north, south and east.

There are no known bat roost locations in close proximity to the property – the closest is situated approximately 850m to the south in Hugh Town with further roosts 1km or more to the west.

Building Description(s):

The property of Samson House is a two-storey building with a pitched, scantle-tiled slate roof. It is a relatively newly built dwelling around 15 years old.

This PRA is restricted to the location of the proposed dormer window and the adjacent elements of the structure which might conceivably be directly or indirectly affected by the proposals either during or following construction. This area is the western side of the north-eastern roof pitch, situated to the rear of the property. This building description does not include an assessment of the wider property, or elements of the structure which would not be affected by the proposals under consideration in this application.

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

Structural Elements which would be directly affected by proposals

The roof section in question has a sloping pitch which finishes above a single storey element of the property to the rear. The slate tiles are well fitted and in excellent condition – no gaps were noted which would potentially provide roosting crevices for bats. Set within the section of roof under consideration is a Velux window – this is well fitted with no suitable roosting opportunities for bats identified around the fitting. Internally, the plasterboard has been stripped back and the timber structure supporting the roof can be directly inspected from the room. There is no internal roof void or other space to which bats could access – potential features would be restricted to gaps between the tiles and the underfelting and, as discussed above, the quality of the fitting excludes this possibility.

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

Structural Elements which would not be directly affected by proposals

The following features would not be directly affected by the proposals, but are assessed due to their proximity to the proposed working area in order to inform an appropriate working methodology.

The ridge tiles above the roof are well-fitted and sealed – these do not appear to offer any roosting opportunities.

There are two dormer windows situated to the south-east of the proposed new dormer. There would be a separation of >1m between the new and existing dormers, and the existing dormers would not be directly impacted by the proposals. There are low-potential roosting opportunities which may be suitable for individual bats associated with these existing features – the primarily location is beneath the lead flashing at the apex where the window ties in with the roof, however small cavities beneath hanging tiles also occur.

The soffit box below the roof is relatively well-sealed aside from two holes where pipework appears to have been removed. These potential entry points were inspected with a video endoscope and the interior void was found to be densely cobwebbed, indicating a significant accumulation of material without intermittent disturbance. It can be concluded with confidence that this is not used by roosting bats at the time of survey, and it is highly unlikely to have been utilized in the recent past. However future use cannot be ruled out.

The fascia board running along the verge of the north-western gable of the roof is lifted in places – this could potentially provide roosting opportunities for individual 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 pitch of the roof under consideration provides **negligible potential** for use by roosting bats.

The existing dormer, the soffit, and the fascia on the western gable of the building – all adjacent structures – could potentially support individual common pipistrelle bats though this is considered to be **low potential**. These features would not be directly affected by the proposals but avoidance measures should be built into the construction methodology as a precaution.

Recommendations and Justification (Bats):

No further surveys are recommended – the conclusion of **negligible potential** relating to the structural element directly impacted by the works 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 works.

Standard good practice and vigilance should be observed by the contractors undertaking the works in acknowledgement that bats are transient in their use of roosting opportunities and may explore potential locations. The potential for individual common pipistrelle bats to make use of minor features associated with adjacent structural elements of the building means that these features must not be impacted during works. This would require due care to avoid disturbance or accidental damage. Recommendations to ensure legislative compliance are provided in Appendix 2.

Assessment of Potential for use by Nesting Birds

It is considered that the western pitch of the roof and adjacent structural features provide **negligible potential** for use by nesting birds.

Recommendations and Justification (Birds):

There is no requirement to mitigate for loss of nesting habitat for breeding birds.

Signed by bat worker(s): **Date:** 17th January 2022

[redacted]

APPENDIX 2
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PRECAUTIONARY METHOD STATEMENT WITH REGARDS TO BATS

The purpose of this Method Statement is to ensure that the 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.*

Contractors should be aware of **where bats are most likely to be found in respect to the roof to be replaced:**

The area of roof to be directly impacted through the installation of the new dormer window does not offer any opportunities for use by roosting bats. However adjacent structural features do provide low potential and these are considered below.

Construction activities including 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 structures adjacent to the works site**.

There is low potential for individual bats to use transient roosting opportunities beneath minor gaps in tiles and lead flashing around the existing dormer. The fascia board attached to the roof verge on the north-western gable also has a gap behind which may potentially be accessed by bats. The soffit below the roof has two pipe-holes which could potentially be accessed by bats.

The roof replacement works can approach, but must not impact upon or obstruct, these features in order for the assessment and working methodology outlined in this report to be valid.

Care should be taken during works to ensure that these structures are not disturbed, obstructed, or damaged. This involves careful design of scaffolding installation and may include a contractor briefing to ensure that those working on the roof 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 **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 the location of property within the local environs (red circle). Reproduced in accordance with Google's Fair Use Policy.

Map 02 – Showing the area of the roof where the dormer is proposed (red) within the remainder of the Samson House property (blue).

Photograph 1: Showing the proposed location for the new dormer window approximately 1m to the right of the existing dormer. Image is taken from the north-western corner of the property.

Photograph 2: Showing the roof structure from the existing Velux window – the scantle tiles are well fitted and in good condition. The adjacent dormer can be seen in the background.

Photograph 3: Showing the roof section taken from the rear of the property – the tightly-fitted wood cladding of the exterior can be seen.

Photograph 4: Showing the view from inside the property – the underfelting is in excellent condition and offers no potential internal access to voids or roosting opportunities.

Photograph 5: Showing the fascia board on the north-western gable with gaps beneath. This area would not be directly impacted by proposals.

Photograph 6: Showing the slightly lifted tiles on the adjacent dormer with the lifted flashing where it meets the main roof visible to the right.