

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

1 & 2 PORTHCRESSA TERRACE,
HUGH TOWN, ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY



Client: Lesley & Phillip Jones

Our reference: 23-1-2

Planning reference: Produced in advance of submission

Report date: 15th January 2023

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

Contact: ios.ecology@gmail.com

Executive Summary

Bats - Results and Findings

The preliminary roost assessment (PRA) survey concluded that there was **negligible potential** for use of the rear pitched roof of 1 and 2 Porthcressa Terrace by bats. This assessment relates solely to the rear pitch of the roof; it does not provide a comprehensive assessment of the buildings in question.

Whilst a negligible potential is concluded, it is noted that there is a small chance of opportunistic/transient use of individual discreet features. This potential is not sufficient to justify further surveys or significant constraints to works, 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 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

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, especially if the condition of structural features were to change. A specific methodology is provided in Appendix 1.

A Planning Condition requiring compliance with the Precautionary Method of Works (PMW) outlined in Appendix 1 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

There is a minor risk of individual bird species finding occasional nesting habitat associated with gaps below the sill of the uPVC windows, though no evidence was noted at the time of survey. The survey did not identify any other suitable nesting habitat for breeding birds associated with the elements of the structure under assessment.

Nesting Birds - Recommendations

Works should take account of the minor residual risk of species such as wren or robin making use of nesting opportunities during the breeding season.

If the applicant wishes to provide biodiversity enhancement, nest boxes could be erected either on the dwelling or within the residential garden. Guidance on suitable specifications is provided.

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

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

Planning Authority: Isles of Scilly	Location: SV 90542 10478	Planning Application ref: Report produced in support of application
Planning application address: 1 & 2 Porthcressa Terrace, Hugh Town, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly		
Proposed development: The proposed works were identified by the client and accord with the documentation submitted in support of the application. These involve: 1) The removal of existing scantle tiles on the rear (eastern) pitch of the roof spanning both properties, and replacement with flat slate tiles.		
Building references: The roof section in question is identified in the plans provided in Appendix 2.		
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 13 th January 2023 in accordance with relevant Best Practice methodology ² .		
Local and Landscape Setting: The properties are situated within the residential area of Hugh Town in St Mary's in the Isles of Scilly. The land use immediately surrounding the properties comprise dense residential development with generally small gardens although there is a more developed areas of green space to the immediate west of the properties. The shoreline of Porthcressa Beach lies close to the south of the properties with the green space of the allotments, playground and setting of Buzza Tower close by to the east. Three records of common pipistrelle roosts are identified in relatively close proximity to the properties – these relate to individual bats utilising features such as hanging slates around dormer windows.		
Building Description(s): The properties of 1 and 2 Porthcressa Terrace are end- and mid-terrace two-storey residential buildings. The pitched roof is scantle-tiled on the eastern pitch and flat slate-tiled on the western pitch, with dormers present in both pitches. The properties have single-story flat-roof extensions to the east. The proposals under consideration in the current Planning Application are restricted to re-roofing works on the eastern pitch – therefore the remainder of this description and assessment		

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

will relate to those aspects of the properties to be directly and indirectly affected by these works only. This is to ensure clarity and brevity.

The eastern pitch of the roof has closely-fitted scantle tiles which are well sealed with cement and further by moss, lichens and other plant species. Where historic slippages have occurred, these have been repaired and sealed such that no gaps between tiles was identified. Any minor apparent gaps were inspected at close distance using a torch and binoculars to confirm that they are superficial and unsuitable to support roosting bats. Ridge tiles are similarly well-sealed. Inspection of the gable end of 1 Porthcressa Terrace confirmed that the roof verge is well-pointed with no gaps present.

There are uPVC fascias and guttering along the eaves which are well sealed with no gaps noted. The flat-roof extensions on the eastern aspect of the properties connect with the main building just below the eaves which would block direct fly-in access for bats.

The uPVC windows of the dormer are well-sealed although there is a small space beneath the sill which was fully inspected with a torch – no evidence of current or historic presence of bats were noted. There are minor cavities extending up the side of the window frames in the property at 1 Porthcressa Terrace – these were fully inspected with a video endoscope and found to be relatively shallow and filled with cobwebs and debris indicating no recent occupation. The equivalent gaps of the property at 2 Porthcressa Terrace were blocked with expanding foam.

The lead flashing where the uPVC windows meet the roof below were slightly lifted in places. These gaps were largely superficial and were fully inspected using a torch. Debris confirmed a lack of recent occupation and the restricted fly-in, coupled with the suboptimal dimensions would make occupation by bats highly unlikely.

The valley in the roof where the dormers meet the main pitch of the roof have minor gaps beneath the flashing – these were fully inspected with a video endoscope and found to be relatively shallow and filled with cobwebs and debris indicating no recent occupation.

The concrete chimneys were well-sealed and in good condition – lead flashing was present on only one of the two structures and was confirmed to be in good condition with no gaps noted.

Hanging tiles on the sides of the dormer windows were well-fitted with no gaps noted.

The loft space of 1 Porthcressa Terrace was inspected internally – this is a small void built above the collar beam of A-frame timbers with a ridge board at the apex. No insulation was noted. There is ply boarding throughout above the rafters – this was largely well-sealed with only very minor locations where gaps occurred. The chimney is boarded out internally and has only aesthetic function – it could be fully inspected from the loft space. Evidence of mouse and white-toothed shrew were noted but no evidence of bats was identified. There is no loft access to the property at 2 Porthcressa Terrace but the roof and loft space is understood to be of equivalent construction.

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

Survey Limitations

It was not possible to fully inspect the loft space in 2 Porthcressa Terrace, and the presence of a water tank in 1 Porthcressa Terrace restricted comprehensive access to this void. However the nature of the construction makes it unlikely that bats could access the void due to comprehensive under-boarding. These constraints are taken into account in the assessment which relies on the comprehensive external inspection which did not identify any suitable access features for bats. Minor residual risk can be controlled through an appropriate Precautionary Method of Works (PMW) which is provided in Appendix 1.

There were no other significant 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 and an overall **negligible potential** was determined; however it is noted that there is a small residual risk of opportunistic/transient use of the features noted.

This assessment relates only to the eastern roof pitch of the two properties in question.

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.

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 opportunities associated with listed features should be taken into account during works. These features are:

- The lead flashing in the valley between the pitched roof of the dormer windows, and the main pitch of the roof;
- The tiles immediately adjacent to the uPVC windows on either side;
- The lead flashing where the uPVC window joins the tiles below.

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.

Assessment of Potential for use by Nesting Birds

It is considered that the relevant structures described in this report provide **low potential** for use by nesting birds; however there is a minor residual risk of species such as wren or robin making use of the gap beneath the window sill to build a nest.

Recommendations and Justification (Birds):

Timing of Works

Works affecting the roof, specifically the void below the uPVC window, should be undertaken outside of the breeding season which runs from March – September inclusive, where practicable.

Pre-commencement Inspection

If the recommended timing of works is not practicable, then contractors should visually inspect this location before they are affected by the works, in order to confirm that no nests are present. In the unlikely event that a birds nest is present, it must be left undisturbed until chicks have fledged the nest, at which point works can proceed.

Enhancement Measures

There is no requirement to mitigate for loss of nesting habitat for breeding birds as the features are of low suitability and would be recreated following the re-roofing works. 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.

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: 15th January 2023



APPENDIX 1

PRECAUTIONARY METHOD STATEMENT WITH REGARDS TO BATS

The purpose of this Method Statement is to ensure that roof replacement 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 replacement 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:**

Lead flashing

Minor lifted sections occur within the lead flashing where the dormers meet the roof tiles below, and in the valley between the pitch of the dormer and the adjacent roof.

If these are to be removed as part of the works, locations where the flashing is lifted should be exposed carefully such that if any bats were present behind the lifted element, they would not be crushed or otherwise injured by the operation. Contractors should satisfy themselves that no bats are present before proceeding with works in these areas.

uPVC Window Frames

There is a minor gap below the uPVC window frame which should be fully inspected visually before works commence in order to confirm that no bats are present.

In the case of 1 Porthcressa Terrace, there are minor gaps extending upwards at either corner of this gap – works in this location should be designed to carefully expose this void and confirm absence of bats before works continue. This is likely to involve careful removal of tiles in such a way that in the unlikely event of bats being present, they are not harmed or killed by the removal. This feature does not appear to be present in the case of 2 Porthcressa Terrace.

This feature is the only location where a low risk of use by nesting birds was identified – the inspection should also confirm the absence of nests or breeding birds prior to proceeding.

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

LOCATION PLAN AND PHOTOGRAPHS



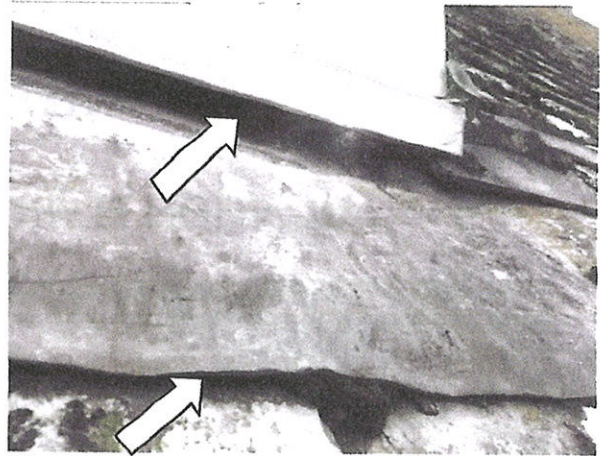
Map 01 - Illustrating location of property within the local environs (red circle). Reproduced in accordance with Google's Fair Use Policy.



Map 02 - Showing the roof to be replaced (blue) which includes the eastern pitch of both 1 and 2 Porthcressa Terrace. The footprint of the properties are indicated with the red line for reference - the building structures to the east are single-storey flat-roof components whilst to the west is the western pitch of the main roof.



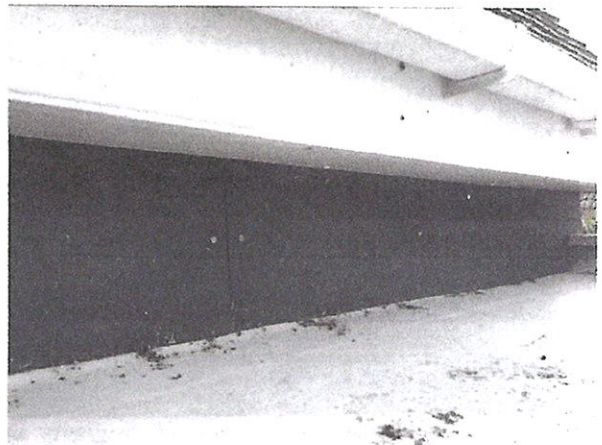
Photograph 1: Showing the pitch of the roof as viewed from the adjacent flat roof.



Photograph 2: Showing the very minor gaps beneath lead flashing (lower arrow) and beneath the uPVC sill (upper arrow) associated with the dormer windows.



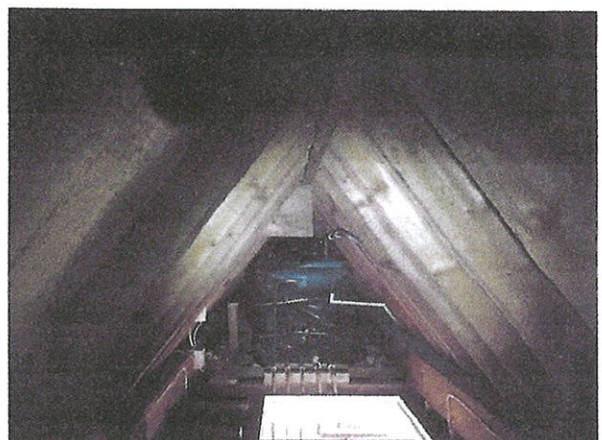
Photograph 3: Showing the location where flashing is lifted at the base of the valley between the dormer and main roof pitches. By contrast, the very tight fit of the remaining scantle tiles and hanging tiles on the dormer can be seen.



Photograph 4: Showing the uPVC fascia and guttering at the eaves of the pitched roof, with the flat roof visible below.



Photograph 5: Showing the tight cement pointing on the roof verge – this is at the gable of No 1 Porthcressa Terrace on the northern aspect.



Photograph 6: Showing the interior of the roof void of No 1 Porthcressa Terrace.