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PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA) JUNE 2023 UPDATE

TOWN HALL, ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY



Client: Council of the Isles of Scilly

Our reference: 23-6-1

Planning reference: Report produced in advance of submission

Report date: 28th June 2023

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Executive Summary

Bats – Results and Findings

The following assessments of potential are identified for roosting bats:

- The front porch of the Town Hall has **negligible potential** to support roosting bats;
- The main hall has **low potential** to support roosting bats;
- The 1970's extension, cottage, stone shed and plant room have **moderate potential** to support roosting bats;
- The rear porch is a **confirmed bat roost** based on 2022 emergence survey data which supersedes the PRA assessment regarding potential.

No direct evidence of roosting bats was identified through visual inspection; however limitations on accessibility including the presence at height of many of the features means that the assessment relates to the identified potential.

This judgement was reached in accordance with the survey methodologies and evaluation criteria outlined in the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines.¹

Bats – Further Survey Requirements

Potential roosting opportunities identified could be damaged, disturbed or destroyed as a result of the proposed redevelopment works.

In accordance with the criteria outlined in the Best Practice Guidance, further surveys would be required to provide an appropriate evidence-base to support a planning application.

- The structural features identified as offering features with **moderate potential** should be subject to **one PAS survey to update the findings of the PAS surveys completed in 2022.**

This assessment takes into account the 2022 PAS results which confirmed a single roost within the building complex. The results of the 2023 PRA update indicate that a single update survey is sufficient to update the baseline.

This 2023 PAS survey 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”*.

Bats – Recommendations

The results of the recommended surveys would be used to inform and update the mitigation or Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) which would be submitted in support of the Planning Application to allow the development works to proceed. No further recommendations are therefore outlined at this stage.

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: Isles of Scilly	Location: SV 90321 10507	Planning Application ref: Report produced in advance of application
Planning application address: Town Hall, Hugh Town, St Marys		
<p>Proposed development:</p> <p>The proposed works were identified in proposals plans provided by Purcell in June 2023. There are extensive internal and external proposals involved in the creation of a new home for the Isles of Scilly Museum. This involves renovation and modification to existing structure; demolition of minor existing structural elements; re-modelling of existing structures; and the construction of new extensions to the building. Many of these proposals would not have the potential to impact on potential roosting sites for bats and therefore the full scope of structural modifications are not listed here. The following proposed works are of significance in the context of this assessment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Demolition of the existing plant room on the eastern aspect; 2) A new café/bar extension to be constructed on the eastern aspect of the Town Hall resulting in the existing external wall of the town hall being internal to the new structure and the creation of a new roofline parallel with the Town Hall eaves on this aspect; 3) Insulation to be installed between rafters in the attic of the Performance Space; 4) The 1970's extension will be re-profiled and re-roofed with a new zinc roof on one aspect and a slate tiled roof on another; 5) New timber cladding throughout the 1970's extension involving removal of existing coverings and flashing; 6) New windows to be incorporated into the 1970's extension; 7) Existing town hall building to be re-pointed following inspection and cleaning of the masonry; 8) Removal of the slates from the roof of the Town Hall to upgrade the thermal performance before being restored with new flashing; 9) A roof lantern will be incorporated into the roof of the existing Town Hall; 10) The stone shed on the eastern edge of the site will be converted to provide toilet facilities, likely necessitating a full external and internal refurbishment/replacement; 11) Timber structures will be constructed within the courtyard created by the shed, the cottage and the existing Town Hall – this would internalise some elements of these structures and modify potential bat access points within adjacent structures; 12) Renovation works on the rear porch including redecoration; removal of external access doors; and the creation of an internal storeroom in this location. 		

Building references:

The building comprises several distinct elements. For the purpose of this report, and following the nomenclature used in the RIBA Stage 3 report where appropriate, these are identified as:

- Town hall;
- 1970's extension;
- Front porch;
- Rear porch;
- Plant room;
- Stone Shed;
- Cottage.

These structural elements are 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 initial visual inspection was undertaken on 24th February 2022 in accordance with relevant Best Practice methodology².

This assessment was updated with a full PRA inspection on 22nd June 2023. This included both a re-assessment of previously surveyed structures and of additional elements of the structures which have been brought within scope as a result of the updated proposals.

This report presents the results of the 2023 update, with reference to relevant changes since the 2022 initial survey where appropriate.

Local and Landscape Setting:

The buildings are located within Hugh Town; the Parade runs immediately to the north with Silver Street to the south and Ingram's Opening to the east. The immediate western boundary comprises adjacent buildings under private ownership. The cottage and small associated garden and shed are present on the eastern aspect.

The central location within Hugh Town means that the dominant local land use is built environment. This is predominantly residential with small-scale commercial businesses also represented. This densely built environment extends around 300m to the west and around 500m to the east. Some of these adjacent properties have associated areas of garden or green space, but the centre of Hugh Town is relatively densely developed. The location of the buildings is within the narrowest part of Hugh Town with Town Beach and Porthcressa lying 75m to the north and 50m to the south respectively.

The closest areas of green space are the Parade Gardens lying 10m to the north-east; and the grassed area adjacent to Porthcressa Beach lying 15m to the south. Both of these areas are dominated by close-mown amenity grassland with ornamental planting, reflecting their popularity with visitors and fundamentally municipal function. The closest areas of semi-natural habitat are associated with the Garrison approximately 250m to the west; and the land around Buzza Tower approximately 250m to the south-east.

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

Building Description

There are several distinct structural elements within the contiguous building complex. Due to their varying styles of construction, these are considered independently in the following description and are identified in the map provided in Appendix 2.

Town Hall

The main Town Hall is a three-storey granite-built structure containing a full-height performance space to the south with offices and storage rooms across several floors to the north. The building is of granite construction with a pitched, slate-tiled roof. This primary description relates to the main hall structure. The single-storey rear porch; front porch and plant room attached to the main building are considered separately below.

The pointing throughout generally appears in good condition though some gaps and cracks were noted on the eastern aspect which could potentially offer roosting opportunities. The external wall on the western aspect is largely internalized by the attached 1970's extension except at the front of the building where only the single-storey front porch is present. There is a cottage attached to the hall on the eastern aspect and the external wall on the western aspect forms the interior wall to the 1970's extension which runs along its length. Air vents occur on the north-facing face with a louvered vent opening to internal plant close to the apex. These may potentially provide access points for roosting bats.

The slate roof was inspected at height on the western aspect but from ground level only on the eastern aspect. Slate tiles are generally well fitted but occasional minor gaps occur where tiles have slipped or lifted. The ridge tiles are similarly well fitted in the main, though occasional gaps occur. Where the roof meets with the adjacent 1970's extension, the valley is lead-lined and this appears to be in good condition. A fascia board supporting guttering runs along the eaves on the eastern and part of the western aspect above the front porch. There are gaps behind this in places, due to minor lifting but also reflecting the irregular nature of the granite blockwork which lies behind it. Minor gaps behind roof and ridge tiles, and behind the fascia board, could potentially support roosting bats.

Internally, the building is in active, ongoing use as a temporary museum space; as a largely disused performance space; and as offices/store-rooms. The roof is built around a timber framework with steel braces and supports and is exposed throughout the performance space; the ceiling of the main performance space is timber clad above the rafters and appears to be well-sealed and in good condition. The walls of this open portion are rendered/painted and in good condition.

There is attic space above the office/stores to the north of the building. This is under-felted throughout – the felting appears to be in good condition but there is potential internal access for bats at the eaves and also in the wall around the vent where plant exits the attic space. The attic appears rarely used and there is dust and debris present; however this permitted a full inspection and no evidence of roosting bats was noted. There are limited internal roosting opportunities, restricted largely to free-hanging from timbers or discreet opportunities between wooden elements of the construction or fittings. The window in the attic space means that this area is light during the daytime. Internal walls were well-pointed and no suitable crevices for bats were noted.

Plant Room

On the eastern aspect of the main hall is a plant room supporting a boiler. This is single-storey with a pitched, slate-tiled roof. Internally, the ceiling is breeze block with gaps between the blocks offering suitable roosting niches for bats. Internal access for bats would be possible through the louvered door.

The pitched roof is generally well fitted though gaps occur beneath tiles at the eaves. There is

lead flashing at the union between the roof and the adjacent hall which is lifted at the base providing minor gaps. Soffits run beneath the eaves with guttering attached; these are generally well-fitted but with gaps allowing potential access around the wall adjacent to the hall. Minor gaps under missing/lifted tiles were noted on the northern aspect of the roof.

At the time of the initial survey in February, this room was warm as a result of the operation of the boiler; a conversation with the caretaker responsible for the building indicated it was rarely on during the summer period suggesting the presence of the boiler would not lead to significant fluctuations in internal conditions during the main active season. This was confirmed during the June 2023 update.

Rear Porch

A single-storey porch is present on the southern aspect of the main hall. This has a well-fitted slate-tiled roof with minor gaps at the eaves but these are largely blocked by the guttering. There is a soffit below the eaves which is largely well-fitted though very minor gaps occur close to the wall of the hall. There are minor gaps beneath a fascia running along the gable apex which would provide suitable minor roosting opportunities. Further opportunities are associated with minor gaps behind lifted flashing where the roof meets the adjacent wall. There is potential for the bats accessing features beneath the fascia to access roosting opportunities within the sealed void.

A bat was recorded emerging from a roost beneath the gable fascia of this porch during the PAS surveys in 2022 – this feature is therefore a confirmed roost.

Front Porch

The front porch is attached at the northern end of the eastern aspect of the hall, in-line with the 1970's extension. The exterior faces are fronted with glass, slate, granite or well-fitted metal covering. No potential roosting features were recorded associated with this element of the structure.

There is a small, irregularly shaped scantle-tiled roof which runs between this porch and the adjacent offsite building to which it is also attached – this is well-sealed with no gaps noted.

1970's extension

The remainder of the eastern aspect of the hall has a 1970's extension attached. This is a 3-storey building constructed from granite with the blockwork exposed on the northern aspect and pebble-dash on the southern aspect. The top floor is built into a Mansard roof with vertical hanging tiles on all four aspects.

The windows are built into both the walls and mansard roof of the extension – these are generally well-fitted by the metal lining though this is lifted on one window on the northern aspect potentially providing access beneath. Further flashing is lifted at the top of the slate-tiled element of the construction.

The southern aspect of this extension has uPVC windows which are well-fitted. Potential gaps occur beneath the flashing which overlaps the top of the slates and is lifted in places. These could provide potential roosting opportunities for individual bats. Felted chipboard between the pebble-dash and the slate-lined Mansard roof was recorded as damaged and lifted in places in 2022; this had been repaired and replaced by June 2023 and no longer offers roosting opportunities.

The western aspect of the extension is bounded by private property and could only be remotely viewed during the visual assessment; however many of the features noted on the southern aspect can be seen to occur on the western aspect with the addition of gaps beneath some of the slate tiles. Windows and associated flashing on this aspect appear generally well-fitted.

Cottage

There is a two-storey cottage attached to the eastern aspect of the main hall. The cottage is rendered & painted externally with a well-fitted scantle-tiled roof and well-pointed ridge tiles. No gaps associated with the roof tiles were noted on the northern aspect, though gaps at the eaves on the southern aspect were apparent. Fascias on the southern aspect had gaps behind them in places which could provide roosting opportunities for bats. The fascia boards were not present on the northern aspect where guttering was instead attached directly to the wall.

Wooden and uPVC windows throughout the property were well-fitted with no gaps noted around the frames. The gable was well-pointed and the chimney well-fitted, though a minor and likely-superficial gap in the concrete flaunching was noted.

Internally, the loft space was inspected from an access hatch – the size and structure of the loft space precluded a comprehensive inspection. The roof is built around a timber truss framework with no ridge present. The roof is under-felted throughout and appeared to be in good condition. The internal granite stone walls at the gable ends were well-pointed with no gaps noted. No evidence of bats was identified; however the limitations on access precluded a comprehensive inspection.

The interface between the cottage and the hall is lined with lead flashing which is generally in good condition although minor lifted components were noted on the northern aspect.

Stone Shed

Within the courtyard of the cottage is a single-storey granite-block shed with a pantile roof. The roof is generally well-sealed with pointing between tiles and expanding foam visible internally – however in places there are gaps beneath the tiles, especially around the eaves which could provide access for bats.

Internally, the shed is used as a recreational space with the southern portion of the shed under-boarded. The entrance area to the north is open to the tiles. There would be potential for bats to find roosting opportunities between the tiles and the under-boarding as well as potentially associated with the wall-plate. The granite-block walls are well-pointed with no gaps or roosting opportunities noted – additionally there are obstructions within the courtyard including a garden shed and an oil tank which would obstruct direct fly-in access for bats. A gap was noted in the lintel above the door which could potentially provide a roosting niche for bats, but this was found to be densely cobwebbed at the time of survey.

The wooden garden shed adjacent to the stone shed was inspected and found to have no potential roosting opportunities for bats – this structure is not given further consideration in this report.

Adjacent Structures

There was very limited scope to inspect the buildings which are attached to, or directly abut the 1970's extension on the western aspect; however barge boards on the adjacent building closest to the Parade were lifted in places offering potential access or roosting opportunities.

Survey Limitations

It was not possible to inspect the void above the top offices within the Mansard roof of the 1970's extension; however this would represent a very minor, low void and access to inspect internally would not be possible beyond the immediate vicinity of the sealed hatch.

The offsite side of the 1970's extension to the west is in private ownership and therefore inspection of this aspect of the building was only possible from adjacent roads representing limited scope for inspection.

Full inspection of the loft space in the cottage was not possible due to the size and structure of the void.

All of these limitations are accounted for in the assessment and inform the recommendations for further surveys.

Assessment of Potential for use by Roosting Bats

The following assessments of potential are identified for roosting bats:

- The front porch has **negligible potential** to support roosting bats;
- The main hall has **low potential** to support roosting bats;
- The 1970's extension, cottage, stone shed and plant room have **moderate potential** to support roosting bats;
- The rear porch is a **confirmed bat roost**, based on results of the 2022 PAS surveys.

The adjacent structures including the offsite buildings to the west would not be directly affected by the proposals, nor are indirect impacts considered to be likely based on the current scope of proposed works. No further consideration of these elements is therefore required.

2022 PAS Surveys

In accordance with the assessment and recommendations provided in the original PRA report, the following surveys were undertaken in 2022:

- The structural features identified as offering low potential were subject to a single PAS survey;
- The structural features identified as offering features with moderate potential were subject to two PAS surveys;
- An additional PAS survey was conducted on the rear porch to gather further information on the confirmed roost.

The cottage and stone shed were not specifically included in this survey remit; however their proximity to other structural elements under direct observation would mean that any emergence or re-entry from the potential roosting locations associated with these structures would have been recorded by the surveyors. For the purposes of this assessment therefore, the cottage and stone shed are considered to have been functionally included within the previous PAS remit.

The PAS surveys in 2022 identified a single bat emerging from a roosting location associated with the rear porch of the building on a single occasion. No other emergence was identified throughout the site.

Recommendations and Justification (Bats):

The results of the updated PRA survey in 2023 did not identify any significant change in the assessment of potential for use of the buildings by bats. The potential of the stone shed and cottage were assessed as moderate.

An additional PAS survey is recommended in order to provide a suitably up-to-date baseline for a revised planning application in 2023. This is for the following reasons:

- Bats will use different structures at different times of the year as well as change roosting sites between years. It is therefore possible that bats have changed their use of the building between 2022 and 2023;

- Additional buildings are brought specifically within scope of the surveys and, whilst they are considered to have been functionally included in the 2022 PAS surveys, they should be included as a specific focus in at least one survey;
- The original report recommended that, with regard to the specific features present in the Town Hall building, the validity of the PAS surveys was 12 months which has been exceeded.

A repeat of the full 2022 survey remit is not considered necessary with regard to the previous results and the condition of the building. It is therefore recommended that the following would be required to update the ecological baseline for the site:

- A **single update PAS survey** is completed to cover the Moderate Potential features within the building complex. This can be undertaken with 4x surveyors on a single survey occasion.

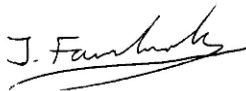
The PAS survey should be led by Licenced Bat Worker(s) between May and August.

This survey should be completed and the results 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”*.

The results of these surveys would be used to inform the update of mitigation or Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) which would be submitted in support of the Planning Application.

Signed by bat worker(s):

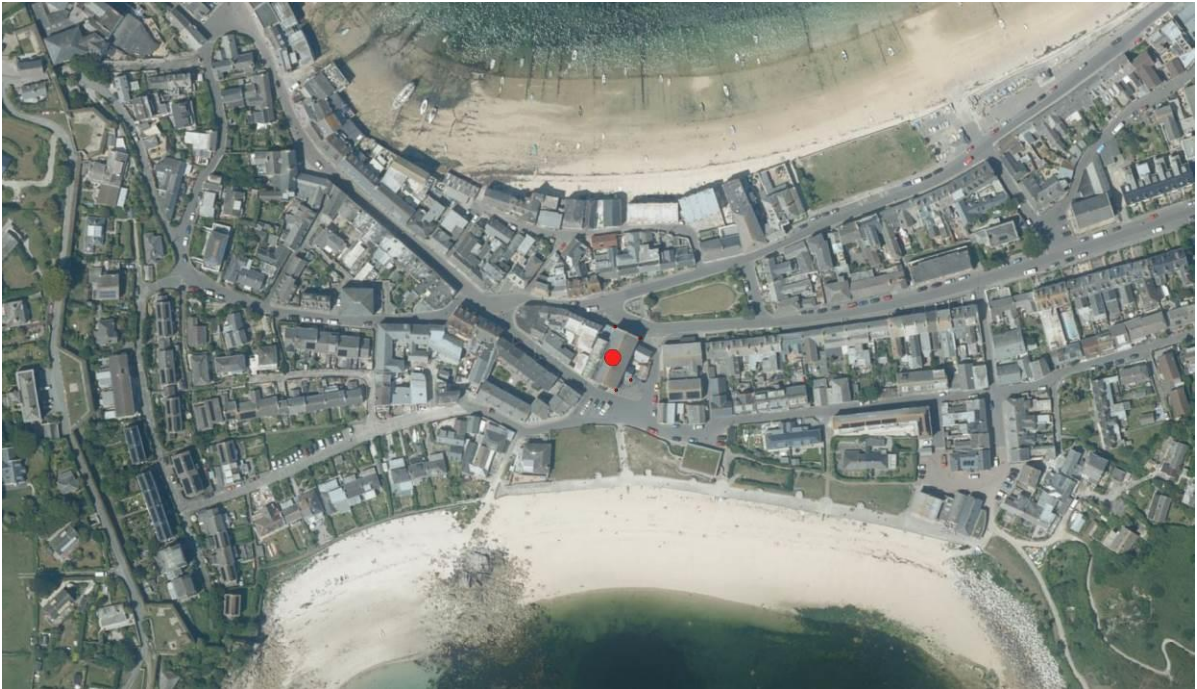
Date: 28th June 2023



APPENDIX 2

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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 main hall (orange), 1970's extension (red); front porch (blue); rear porch (green), plant room (yellow), cottage (dark purple) and stone shed (light pink).



Photograph 1: Showing the lifted flashing around the window on the 1970's extension on the northern aspect.



Photograph 2: An example of the gaps behind the fascia board on the western aspect of the hall as well as gaps in the pointing beneath.



Photograph 3: Showing one of the cracks in the blockwork on the eastern aspect of the hall.



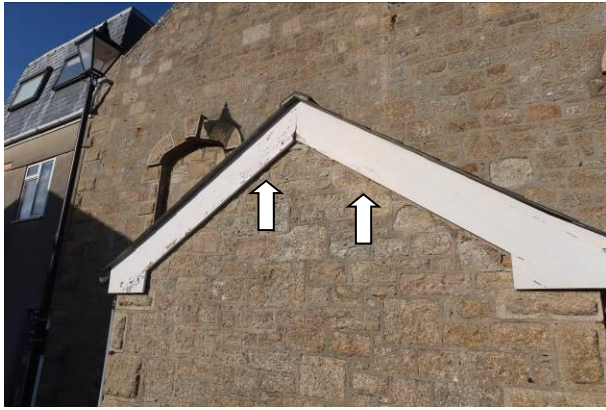
Photograph 4: Showing one of the minor gaps beneath the ridge tiles on the hall.



Photograph 5: Showing an example of the gaps allowing potential access beneath slate tiles in the plant room; similar features exist on the rear porch.



Photograph 6: Showing an example of the gaps allowing potential access beneath soffit box in the plant room; similar features exist on the rear porch.



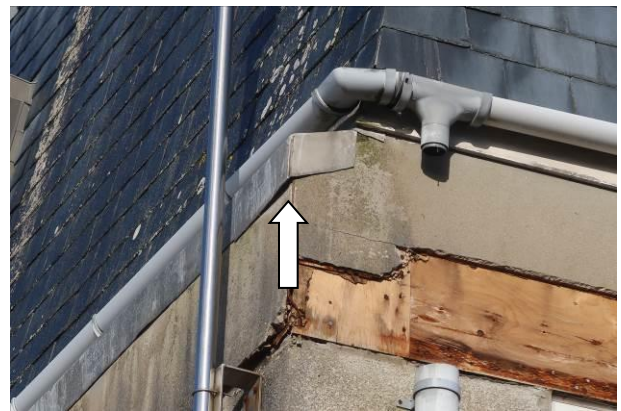
Photograph 7: Showing gaps behind the fascia board on the gable of the rear porch



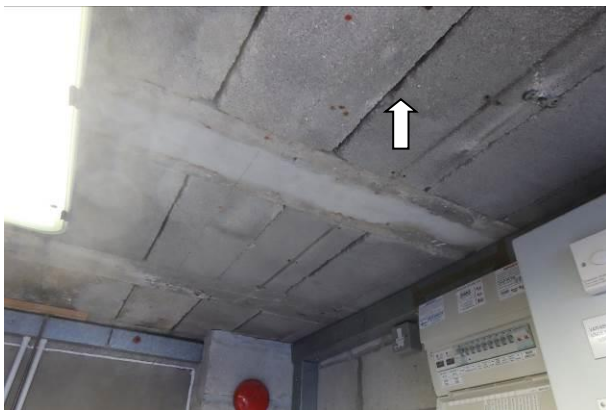
Photograph 8: Showing an example of lifted flashing at the top of the hanging tiles on the 1970's extension.



Photograph 9: Gaps under missing tiles on the Plant Room roof.



Photograph 10: Showing an example of lifted flashing between the slate tiles of the Mansard roof and the boarding beneath on the 1970's extension. **This photograph was taken in 2022 - the damaged boards have been repaired in 2023.**



Photograph 11: Showing gaps between breeze blocks in the ceiling of the plant room.



Photograph 12: The attic space within the main hall showing the timber roof structure and underfelting above. Lighting is from the window set into the north wall.



Photograph 13: Showing the internal roof space of the stone shed – this section at the entrance is not under-boarded.



Photograph 14: Showing the exterior of the stone shed.



Photograph 15: Showing examples of gaps beneath the tiles at the eaves of the stone shed.



Photograph 16: Showing the front aspect of the cottage – no potential roosting opportunities were identified on this aspect of the building.



Photograph 17: Showing the northern aspect of the cottage – gaps beneath the tiles at the eaves as well as beneath the fascia boards were noted.



Photograph 18: Showing the loft space in the cottage, viewed from the access hatch.