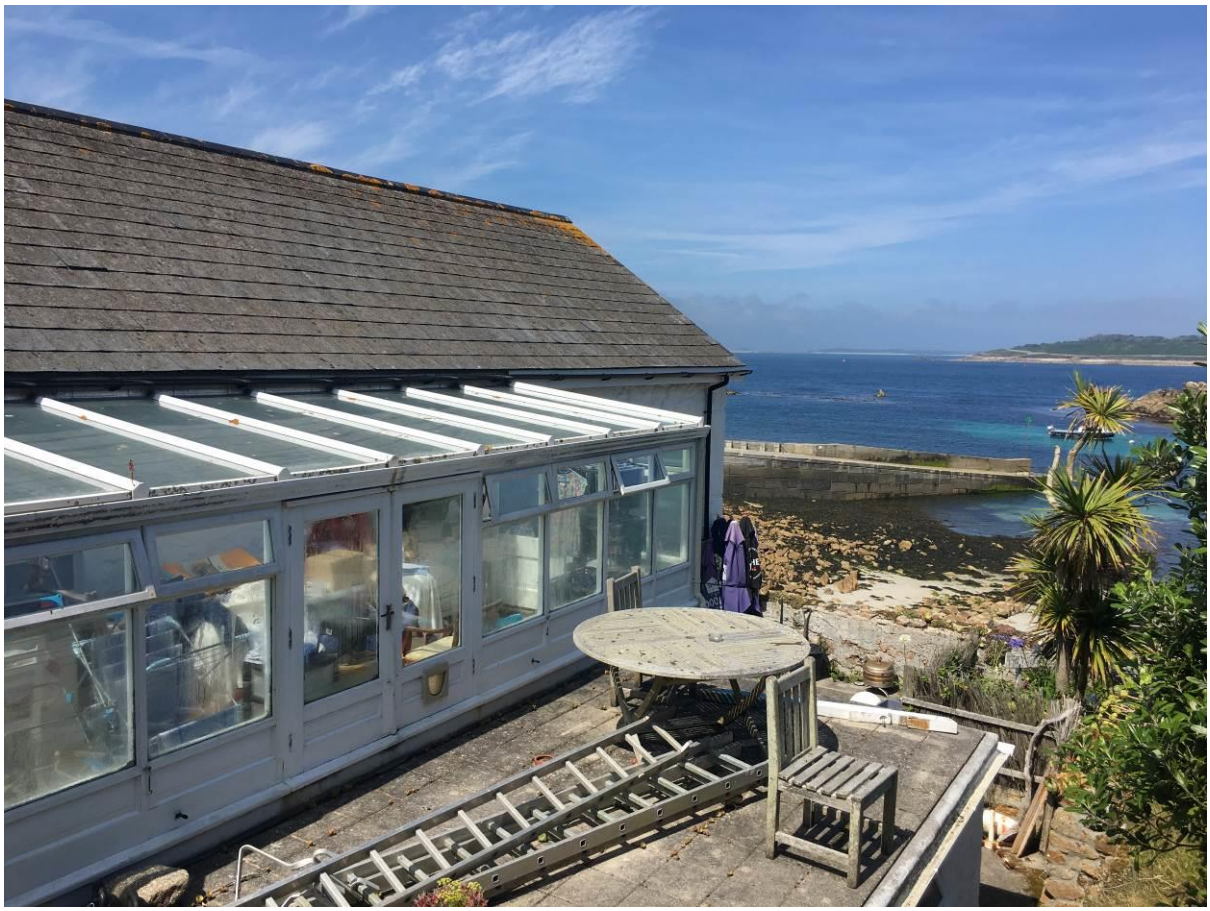
PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

CONSERVATORY REPLACEMENT, TURK'S HEAD, ST AGNES, ISLES OF SCILLY



Client: *Simon Taylor*

Our reference: *23-6-5*

Planning reference: *Report produced in advance of submission*

Report date: *11th July 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 of the structures either directly or indirectly impacted by the proposals concluded that there is **negligible potential** for use by bats. This assessment relates solely to the elements of the structure which would be affected by the current proposals - it does not provide a comprehensive assessment of the buildings in question.
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 summary of standard Good Practice to be observed by contractors is provided in Appendix 1. It is not recommended that any Planning Conditions are required with regards to bats in order to ensure legislative compliance. If the applicant wishes to provide biodiversity enhancement, a bat box could be erected on the western gable of the new or existing building. Guidance on suitable specifications is provided.

Nesting Birds – Results and Findings
The survey identified no evidence of nesting birds within the areas of the buildings to be impacted; however there is historic evidence of nesting in features in close proximity to the works area.
Nesting Birds - Recommendations
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). Recommendations are provided to ensure this. It is the responsibility of the contractors undertaking the works to ensure legislative compliance with regards to nesting birds – it is not recommended that Planning Conditions or other mechanisms are required to support this. As no nesting habitat would be removed, no compensation measures are required though optional enhancement measures are provided.

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

Planning Authority:	**Location:**	**Planning Application ref:**
Isles of Scilly	SV 88358 08471	Report produced in advance of application

Planning application address:

Turk's Head, St Agnes, Isles of Scilly

Proposed development:

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

1) The removal of the existing conservatory on the southern aspect of the property;
2) The construction of a new extension within the same approximate footprint including tying in with the existing roof structure of the main building.

The following assessment takes into account both the potential direct impacts to the structure (e.g. removal of the existing conservatory and tying in with the retained roof) and the indirect impacts (e.g. disturbance to adjacent or offsite features which may support roosting bats).

Building references:

The building comprises several distinct elements which differ in structure, situation, materials and subsequently their potential to support roosting bats. For the purpose of this report, only three components of the structure are considered due to their potential to be directly or indirectly impacted. These are:

- Section A - the main retained roof;
- Section B - the conservatory to be removed; and
- Section C - the flat-roof structure upon which the existing conservatory is constructed.

These structural sections 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 visual inspection was undertaken on 7th July 2023 in accordance with relevant Best Practice methodology[1].

Local and Landscape Setting:

The Turks Head is a public house situated on the north-eastern tip of St Agnes in the Isles of Scilly. The only other built structures in close proximity are those associated with the quay including the public conveniences to the north. The closest settlement is Higher Town situated approximately 220m to the south.

The shoreline lies approximately 20m to the north-east with the island of Gugh present across a short stretch of water. The rocky shoreline here may provide suitable foraging habitat for

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

common pipistrelle during lower tides.

The land to the south and west is dominated by pasture fields used as grazing by cattle. These fields are bounded by stone walls in places, and by small shelterbelt hedges in others.

Common pipistrelle is the only species confirmed as resident on the island. Only a single confirmed roosting record is listed on the Isles of Scilly Bat Group roost register. The confirmed roost is situated approximately 500m to the west though further details relating to species, number and roost type are not recorded.

Building Description

There are several distinct structural sections within the contiguous building complex which comprises the property. Much of the building complex would not be impacted by the proposals; therefore the following descriptions relate to those aspects of the property which would be directly or indirectly impacted by the proposals. This is to ensure clarity and brevity.

For the avoidance of doubt, this assessment does not provide a comprehensive survey of the property beyond those aspects explicitly identified and described below.

Building Section A - Main Pub Building

The two-storey pub identified as Section A is the main structure on the site. The conservatory (Section B) and single-storey extension (Section C) are attached to this on its southern aspect.

The roof is tiled with flat slate tiles and ridge tiles – all appear well fitted and in good condition. A chimney is present – the flashing at the junction with the tiled roof is well-sealed and in good condition. Soffits around the eaves of the roof are well-sealed with attached guttering. The potential for minor gaps beneath tiles at the eaves is largely restricted by the position of the guttering which would preclude a direct fly-in access.

Internally, the roof is built around a modern timber truss framework with no ridge board. Insulation is present between the joists. The roof is under-felted throughout in good condition. Internal gable walls of granite or breeze block appeared well-pointed. The central section of the loft space is boarded on the floor and used for storage – this was clean and relatively accessible though some areas towards the eaves or around water tanks could only be inspected from a close distance. This was not considered to be a constraint on the survey efficacy. No evidence of bats was identified, although individual rodent droppings were noted.

Building Section B - Conservatory

The conservatory to be removed is a relatively modern uPVC structure with double-glazed windows. There are no fascia boards or other elements of the construction which would provide suitable roosting habitat for bats, and the interior of the structure is unsuitable due to lack of features, routine residential use, high light levels and significant diurnal temperature variations.

The junction between the conservatory and the main pub building (Section A) against which it is built is well-sealed with no gaps noted.

Building Section C - (Flat-roof extension)

This is a flat-roof extension on the southern aspect of the main building (Section A) upon which the conservatory (Section B) is constructed at the first-floor height.

The construction is standard at the front, with a kitchen entrance, but is built into the rising hillside on the southern and western aspects such that only the top 1m of wall is visible. Walls, where present, are rendered and in good condition with well-fitted uPVC window and door frames. The flat-roof is well-sealed with no gaps noted. The fascia is tightly fitted with no gaps noted.

On the eastern aspect of this building there is a flight of steps constructed which provides

access to the conservatory (Section B). This is generally well-pointed though there is a recessed water tank used to collect rainwater from the roofs. At the back of the tank is evidence of a historic bird's nest, not active at the time of survey.

Survey Limitations

There were no 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

It is considered that the structural features to be demolished or otherwise affected by the proposals offer **negligible potential** for use by roosting bats.

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, especially if the condition of structural features were to change. A summary of standard Good Practice to be observed by contractors is provided in Appendix 1.

It is not recommended that any Planning Conditions are required with regards to bats in order to ensure legislative compliance.

If the applicant wishes to provide biodiversity enhancement, the position of the western gable of the new structure, or the existing main building (Section A) facing the more sheltered side of the site would offer an ideal location to install a bat box. This should be positioned above 3m from the ground to minimise the risk of predation. An open-based box design would ensure that it would not require cleaning. The location and aspect would be optimal for bats such as common pipistrelle which is the only species confirmed on the island and the most likely species to use the environs for foraging and roosting.

A suitable box could be purchased or constructed following freely available plans. Kent Bat Box style boxes are slim easy to construct from appropriate timber using the plans provided at:

http://www.kentbatgroup.org.uk/kent-bat-box.pdf

Assessment of Potential for use by Nesting Birds

No suitable nesting habitat for birds was identified associated with the elements of the building to be directly affected by the proposals.

The historic nest on top of the recessed water tank would not be directly affected – this feature would remain – however works would take place in close proximity to this. There are also areas of shrubs and other vegetation in close proximity to the conservatory which would potentially be used for storage of materials or subject to disturbance by contractors during demolition / construction.

Recommendations and Justification (Birds):

The features identified above should not be directly impacted by the proposed works; however care should be taken erecting scaffolding etc. in order to ensure these are not disturbed if works proceed in the nesting season.

Caution and vigilance should be exercised if works take place during the breeding season (March – September inclusive) to ensure that if any birds are nesting in features associated with

the structures in close proximity to the works, they are identified and works are designed to avoid damage or disturbance.

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 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): [redacted] **Date:** 11th July 2023

APPENDIX 1
-
BEST PRACTICE WITH REGARDS TO BATS

The purpose of this Method Statement is to ensure that contractors undertaking renovation works are aware of their legal duties with regards to bats, and aware of the appropriate action to be taken in the highly unlikely event of bats being encountered.

Contractors should 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 structure:**

No features suitable for roosting bats were identified within the proposed works area – however contractors should be aware of the type of feature in which bats might be found in this type of structure.

These include:

- Gaps between roofing tiles;
- Crevices and gaps between structural elements, such as the conservatory roof and the uPVC soffits;
- Beneath lead flashing, if this becomes lifted to create a cavity;
- Within loft voids, often at the apex of roof timbers;
- In gaps between fascias/soffits and the adjacent wall.

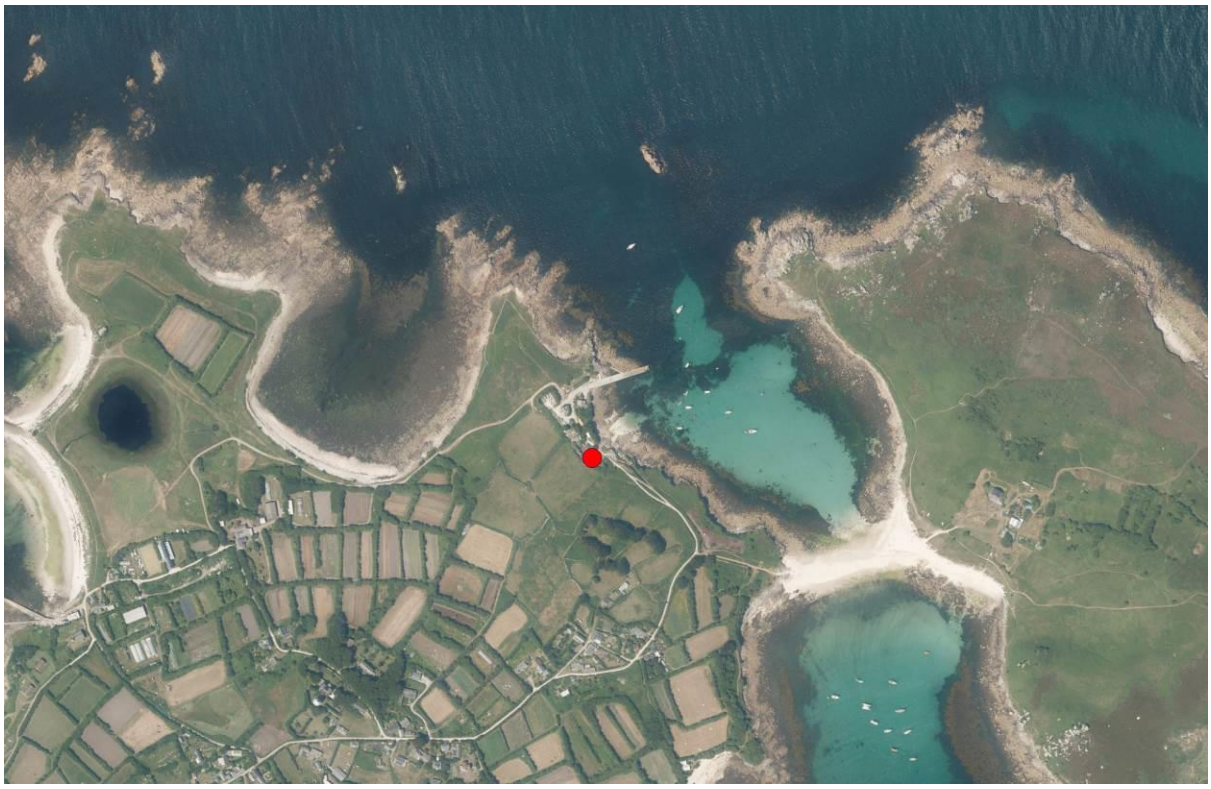
Contractors should be aware of **the process to follow in the highly unlikely event of finding bats** or evidence indicating that bats are likely to be present:

If bats are identified, works should cease and the named ecologist contacted immediately for advice.

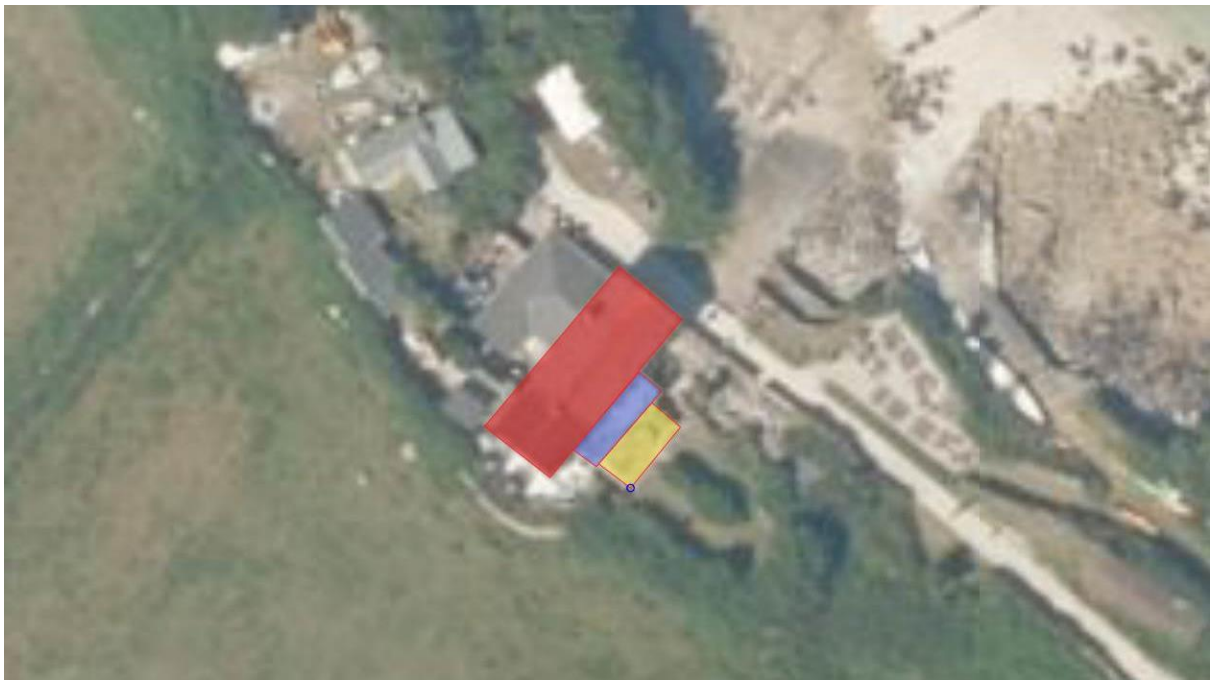
If the bat is in a safe situation, or a situation which can be made safe, they should remain undisturbed.

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.

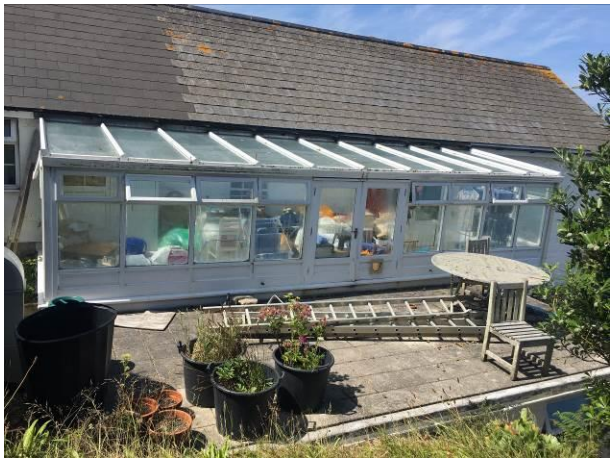
APPENDIX 2
-
LOCATION PLAN AND PHOTOGRAPHS



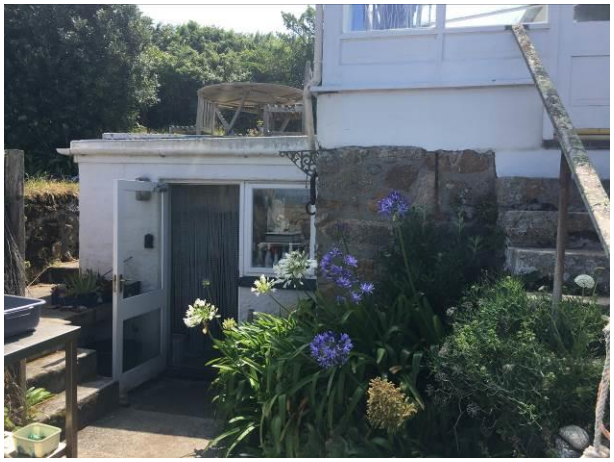
Map 01 – Illustrating the location of the building (red circle) within the local environs. Reproduced in accordance with Google's Fair Use Policy.



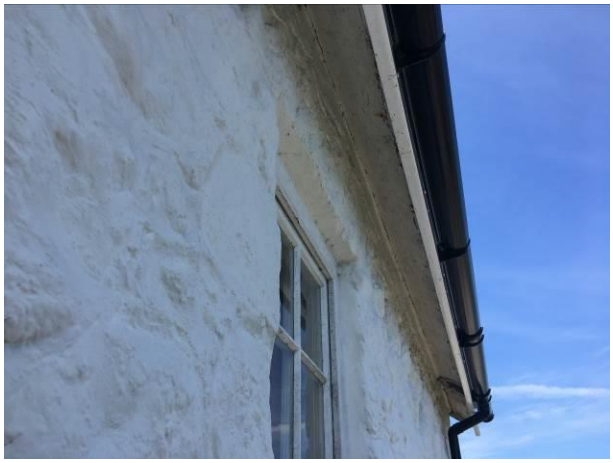
Map 02 – Showing the different building sections including the main roof of the pub (Section A) in the red wash; the conservatory (Section B) in the blue wash; and the flat-roof extension on which the conservatory is built (Section C) in the yellow wash. Note Section C also extends beneath Section B.



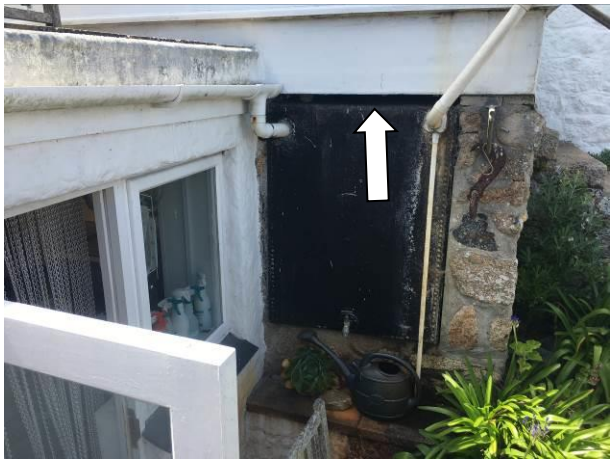
Photograph 1: Showing the conservatory (Section B) attached to the southern aspect of the main building (Section A)



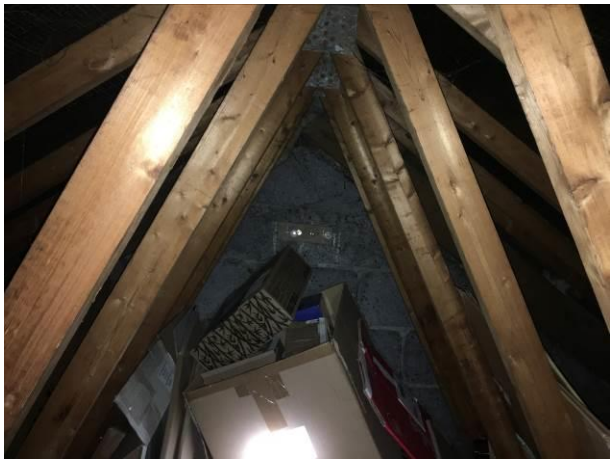
Photograph 2: Showing the conservatory (Section B) built on top of the flat-roof extension (Section C)



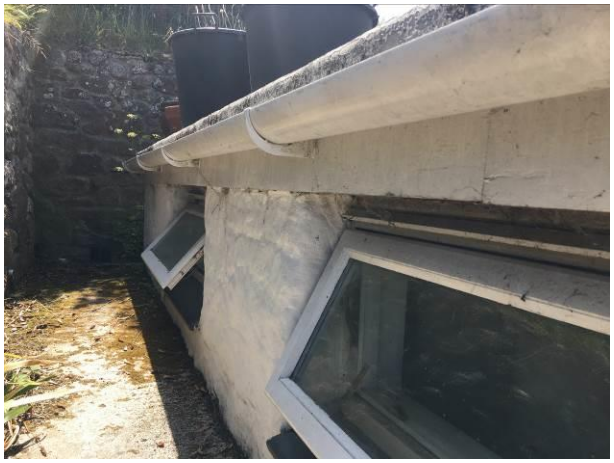
Photograph 3: Showing the well-fitted soffits supporting guttering on the southern aspect of the main building (Section A)



Photograph 4: Showing the integral water tank beneath the conservatory. The gap at the top providing access to the location where a historic nest was confirmed can be seen.



Photograph 5: Showing the interior of the loft space of the main structure (Section A)



Photograph 6: Showing the fascia and guttering below the flat-roof section of the building (Section C) with well-fitted uPVC windows visible.