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PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

VERONICA LODGE,
THE GARRISON, ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY

Client: *Duchy of Cornwall*

Our reference: *25-7-7*

Planning reference: *Report produced in advance of submission*

Report date: *17th August 2025*

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Executive Summary

Bats – Results and Findings
The preliminary roost assessment (PRA) survey of the Veronica Lodge located on the Garrison, St Mary's concluded that there is **Low Potential** for use by bats. This takes into account the results of a previous negative result following two PAS surveys undertaken on the property in 2020.
Bats – Further Survey Requirements
The following recommendation is provided in order to ensure a suitable baseline to ensure legislative compliance and to avoid negative impacts to Protected Species: • **One further Presence/Absence Survey (PAS)** should be undertaken on the property to update and assess the potential use of the roof structures by bats in order to meet the standard of survey required by Best Practice Guidance to ensure legislative compliance during the proposed works and support Planning.

Nesting Birds – Results and Findings
There is potential for individual bird species to find nesting habitat associated with the roof of the property and within the associated garden.
Nesting Birds - Recommendations
Works should take account of the risk of species including gulls making use of nesting opportunities during the breeding season. Recommendations are provided to ensure this, including timing of works or pre-commencement inspections.

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

Report Status
As the requirement for a further PAS survey is identified in accordance with the Best Practice Guidance, this report **does not provide a comprehensive baseline** until these surveys have been completed and their results used to inform appropriate mitigation measures.

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

Planning Authority:	**Location:**	**Planning Application ref:**
Council of the Isles of Scilly	SV 90049 10536	Report produced in advance of application

Planning application address:

Veronica Lodge, The Garrison, Hugh Town, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly

Proposed development:

The proposed works were identified by the client when instructing the PRA inspection and should accord with the proposals:

1) Extensive renovation works to Veronica Lodge including replacement of the existing roof structure;
2) Renovation of the outbuildings.

Building references:

The buildings are identified in the map provided in Appendix 1. The dwelling – Veronica Lodge – is illustrated alongside the two outbuildings which are designated Outbuilding A and Outbuilding B for the purposes of this report.

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 August 2025 in accordance with relevant Best Practice methodology[1].

Local and Landscape Setting:

The property is situated on the hillside at the western edge of Hugh Town on St Mary's in the Isles of Scilly.

The land immediately east of the property is dominated by Hugh Town, a small but densely developed area of residential and small-scale commercial properties.

The land to the west of the property comprises green space associated with the Garrison and Star Castle – this is a mosaic of amenity and semi-improved grassland, elm woodland, conifer trees, heathland and coastal grassland. The shoreline of Little Porth lies 160m to the south of the property with Town Beach situated 200m to the north-east.

The desk study did not reveal any records of bats recorded roosting within the building historically; however a day roost of common pipistrelle was identified in the adjacent property in 2024. Five further records of common pipistrelle roosts are identified in relatively close proximity to the property – these relate to individual bats utilising features such as hanging slates around dormer windows or gaps behind fascias within Hugh Town to the east. There is also a single record of a brown long-eared bat utilising a roosting feature in a pine tree in the

[1] Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London

Garrison woods to the west.

Five species of bat have been recorded on St Mary's. The species conclusively identified were common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*). Leisler's bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*) and Nathusius pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*) records were also returned though these species are not known to be resident on the island and are likely associated with vagrant or migratory individuals.

Previous Surveys

A PRA inspection of the property was previously undertaken by Darren Mason in 2020 – this assessment concluded that the property had Moderate Potential to support roosting bats in accordance with the 2016 Edition of the Good Practice Guidelines which were appropriate at the time.

The assessment concluded that two PAS surveys were therefore required to provide a suitable standard of survey evidence in accordance with the Guidelines.

These surveys – a dusk and a dawn survey - were undertaken by Spalding Associates in late September 2020 only two days apart. Whilst this does not meet the recommended timeframe for surveys to accord with the relevant guidance, this is considered to be an appropriate time to assess transitional use especially given the mild climate in the Isles of Scilly with bat activity recorded throughout the autumn, winter and spring periods. It would not however be appropriate to consider this an appropriate assessment of potential maternity use, and the temporal proximity of the surveys to one another would represent a further limitation.

The PRA survey undertaken by Darren Mason identified a Moderate Potential; however Spalding Associates undertook a visual inspection of the property prior to the emergence and noted in the PRA report:

> "*No bats were seen to emerge from or enter Veronica Lodge or the outbuildings during the survey work undertaken and the buildings were only felt to have very limited potential during the visual survey*."

Whilst a revision in potential is not explicitly made in the Spalding Associates PAS report, this statement suggests that in the view of the latter consultants, a Low Potential may be the more appropriate assessment for this property.

The previous assessment and negative result of the PAS surveys are taken into account when considering the potential of the building to support roosting bats in 2025, with the caveats and limitations noted.

Building Description

The following description will provide an overview of the construction and structural condition of the property with a focus on features which, by their design or condition, could provide suitable roosting opportunities for bats.

Overview

The scope of the survey includes Veronica Lodge itself as well as two outbuildings set within the rear garden. These are described separately below for clarity.

Veronica Lodge

Veronica Lodge is a two-storey detached property which was previously used as a Bed and Breakfast but has been unoccupied and become dilapidated over a number of years.

The exterior walls are rendered throughout with no cracks or other damage which might offer roosting opportunities. Timber window and door frames are well-fitted in their apertures. There are instances where there is rot in the timber frames but these do not currently offer

roosting opportunities in their own right, or offer access to further roosting opportunities associated with the walls or cavities. This could however develop with further deterioration in condition over time.

There are no fascias or soffits – the cast iron guttering is attached directly to the walls below the eaves and is tightly sealed – this structural feature does not appear to offer any roosting opportunities for bats.

The hipped roof is lined with scantle tiles – these appear to be in relatively good condition externally though internal inspection of the loft space identifies potential gaps through light visible at the eaves. The chimneys are rendered in part and appear well sealed – the flashing at the junction with the main roof appears in good condition.

Internally, the loft is dusty with abundant cobwebs which appear to be of some age indicating no significant recent flight within the void. The roof is open to the scantle tiles above the battens with no felting or render. The roof is constructed around a timber truss framework which is well-sealed with no gaps or cavities at the joints. A ridge beam is present. The exterior walls rise around 30cm above the ceiling joists – the blocks are well pointed with flaunching in good condition around the top of the wall plate. No evidence of use by roosting bats was noted – however see access limitations as outlined below.

There is a glazed flat-roof porch on the front of the property – no potential roosting opportunities were identified associated with this structure.

There is a further lean-to structure to the rear with a felted roof – this was similarly well-sealed with no access or roosting opportunities noted.

Ivy is growing up the NW corner of the property – this is not considered to be of a sufficient age or size to offer roosting opportunities for bats.

Outbuilding A

This outbuilding is of granite block construction with a mono-pitch corrugated sheet roof. The outbuilding is built into the hillside and therefore only the front and side walls are prominent; however the rear wall does rise around 1m above the ground level.

The blockwork itself appears in good condition with no gaps or other potential roosting opportunities noted. The low rear wall is heavily overgrown with ivy.

There is a fascia present on the front eaves of the roof – minor gaps are present but these could be fully inspected and were largely filled with debris or occupied by snails at the time of survey.

Internally, the main space does not offer any roosting opportunities for bats although a sealed void present on the southern edge could not be inspected. An external inspection however does not offer any clear means of access to this void for bats.

The corrugated roof sheets offer minor superficial niches where they overlap but these are likely to be of only negligible suitability for transient use.

Outbuilding B

The outbuilding is a granite-built structure with a natural slate roof. Like Outbuilding A, it is built into the hillside; subsequently not all wall aspects are present or visible/accessible.

The blockwork itself is in good condition with no gaps or other potential roosting opportunities noted. The rear wall is heavily overgrown with ivy.

There is no fascia at the eaves of this building, and drop tiles along the gable are well-sealed.

The slate roof has a number of slipped or missing tiles close to the eaves which could permit internal access; however there is no evidence of recent internal flight with abundant cobwebs which are dusty and debris filled indicating an extended period without disturbance.

Courtyard Walls

The granite built courtyard walls which enclose the rear of the property are well-pointed with no gaps noted.

Where these walls extend outside the courtyard setting to the south and west, there are gaps in the pointing in places. These are largely superficial and there is no evidence of current or recent use but they could potentially support individual roosting bats on a transient basis.

Survey Limitations

The following limitations on survey were noted:

- The loft space of Veronica Lodge was surveyed from the vantage point of the loft hatch however concerns over the structural stability of the ceiling meant that full access to inspect the void could not be gained;
- Some features associated with the roof structure could not be safely inspected at height;
- There are locations within the building where evidence of bats, if present, would not have been apparent from a PRA survey, such as roosts which might be present associated with the wall plate.

These are taken into account when concluding the assessments of building potential and are addressed by the recommendations for further surveys.

Assessment of Potential for use by Roosting Bats

The following potential roosting opportunities are identified associated with the property:

- Access beneath tiles within Veronica Lodge to roosting opportunities associated with the roof structure;
- Gaps behind the fascia of Outbuilding A;
- Gaps between slate tiles of Outbuilding B.

Veronica Lodge itself is considered to have **Low Potential** to support roosting bats. This takes into account the previous assessments as detailed above and accords with the conclusions of the visual assessment undertaken by Spalding Associates. There is little evidence to indicate an increase in the number or suitability of potential roosting opportunities over the last five years.

The two outbuildings are considered to have **Negligible Potential** to support roosting bats.

Recommendations and Justification (Bats):

In accordance with the criteria outlined in the Best Practice Guidance[2], the following surveys would be required to provide an appropriate evidence-base upon which to ensure legislative compliance:

- 1x Presence/Absence Survey (PAS).

The purpose of the PAS technique is to allow the building to be watched at dusk to observe bats emerging from concealed roosting locations. This uses the predictable emergence behaviour of bats to allow their presence to be detected in roosting locations which cannot be directly visually inspected.

The PAS surveys should be led by a Licensed Bat Worker between mid-May and mid-September. A minimum of two surveyors with Night Vision Aid (NVA) cameras would be required to cover the relevant features and allow the results of the surveys to be reviewed and confirmed in

[2] Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London

accordance with the Best Practice Guidance.

These surveys 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*".

For the avoidance of doubt, the current survey baseline is not sufficient to support a Planning Application with reference to the Circular 06/05.

If no bats are identified emerging/returning to the building then the results would be incorporated into a PAS report which, submitted alongside this PRA report, would form a suitable ecological basis to support a Planning Application.

If bats are identified emerging from the building, further surveys would be required to fully characterise the roost and provide sufficient evidence of Protected Species to inform a Planning Application.

Assessment of Potential for use by Nesting Birds

The property has the potential to provide suitable nest sites for common bird species. This is associated with the roof, and may include use by gulls which were noted on the chimney pots at the time of survey. The ivy cladding on some walls may also offer nesting opportunities for species such as wren.

There is also potential for nesting birds to use areas within the garden or adjacent structures which could be indirectly disturbed by contractor presence or erection of scaffolding.

Gaps in the stone walls outside the courtyard and extending both south and west of the property may offer further opportunities.

Recommendations and Justification (Birds):

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).

Timing of Works

Works affecting the roof should be undertaken outside of the breeding season which runs from March – September inclusive, where practicable. This would provide the most robust means of avoiding risk of impact to nesting birds.

Pre-commencement Inspection

If the recommended timing of works is not possible, then contractors should visually inspect the work area internally and externally before they are affected by the works, in order to confirm that no nests are present. In the event that a bird nest is present, it must be left undisturbed until chicks have fledged the nest, at which point works can proceed.

Care must also be taken to ensure that the works do not cause disturbance or damage to proximate nesting areas through indirect impacts including vibration, noise or contractor presence.

Enhancement Opportunities

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. Boxes associated with the mature trees or the walled garden behind the property would have a good

chance of occupation.

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.

APPENDIX 1
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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 Veronica Lodge dwelling with the two outbuildings situated to the west.

Photograph 1: Showing the view of the property from south-east with the glazed porch visible on the front.

Photograph 2: Showing the cast iron guttering around the edge of the roof. The chimney with gulls on the pots can also be seen.

Photograph 3: Showing an example of the rot present in some window frames which does not yet offer roosting opportunities for bats but may develop in time.

Photograph 4: Showing the rear of the property with the lean-to structure visible.

Photograph 5: Showing the interior of the loft space of Veronica Lodge.

Photograph 6: Showing Outbuilding B with the natural slate tiled roof. The gaps between slates close to the eaves practise
can be seen.

Photograph 7: Showing the interior of Outbuilding B.

Photograph 8: Showing Outbuilding A with the fascia visible along the eaves. The well-sealed verge on the gable is also illustrated.

Photograph 9: Showing the interior of Outbuilding A where there is no void present.

Photograph 10: Showing the portion of Outbuilding A where a sealed void is present.