PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

WINDRIDGE,
MCFARLAND'S DOWN, ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY

Client: *Tim Hicks*

Our reference: *25-1-3*

Planning reference: *Produced in advance of submission*

Report date: *1st March 2025*

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IOS Ecology

Executive Summary

Bats – Results and Findings
The preliminary roost assessment (PRA) survey concluded that there was **negligible bat roosting potential in relation to the structures to be impacted by the proposed works**. Whilst a negligible potential is concluded with regards to the areas of the structure to be impacted, it is noted that there is a small chance of opportunistic/transient use of individual discreet features associated with gaps beneath ridge tiles at the gable; or in gaps between overlapping corrugated sheets on the lean-to structure. This potential is not sufficient to justify further surveys, 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 4th edition.[1]
Bats – Further Survey Requirements
No further surveys are recommended – the PRA conclusion does not require further information with regards to bats in order to inform a planning application.
Bats – Recommendations
Residual risk can be controlled through a Precautionary Method Statement (PMW) when undertaking specified works – this is provided in Appendix 1. Standard good practice and vigilance should be observed by the contractors undertaking the works. A Planning Condition requiring compliance with the PMW 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 potential for individual bird species such as house sparrow finding nesting habitat associated with discreet features on the building.
Nesting Birds - Recommendations
Works should take place with due regard to the presence of nesting birds – no further surveys are required to inform Planning but works should be timed to avoid the nesting season or include pre-commencement inspections. Nest boxes could be erected either on the dwelling or within the garden to provide enhancement. Guidance on suitable specifications is provided.

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

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

Planning Authority:	**Location:**	**Planning Application ref:**
Isles of Scilly	SV 91285 12327	Report produced in support of application

Planning application address:

Windridge, McFarland's Down, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly

Proposed development:

The proposals for the property were outlined by the client and should correspond with the details included in the Planning Application submitted alongside this report. These are summarised below:

- Removal of existing lean-to element to the rear of the property;
- Construction of a new pitched-roof element within an extended footprint of the existing lean-to. The roof of this new structure will tie into the main roof;
- Remodelling of external window/door arrangements on the rear side of the property.

Building references:

The building is identified in the plans provided in Appendix 2. The main pitched-roof property, identified in the Plan as 'Windridge', is distinguished from the 'Lean-To' section to the rear of the property.

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 25th February 2025 in accordance with relevant Best Practice methodology[2].

Local and Landscape Setting:

Windridge is situated in the residential area of McFarland's Down to the north-west of St Mary's in the Isles of Scilly.

The land to the north and west of McFarland's Down is largely open with a mix of agricultural and pasture land with areas of heathland and coastal grassland on the approach to the shoreline. To the east, directly bounding the garden of the property, is an area of mature coniferous tree cover which extends north towards the shore and south inland. The property is bounded on the northern and southern aspect by residential properties with associated amenity gardens.

The data search confirmed that a common pipistrelle roost was recorded within McFarland's Down in 2014 in a garage approximately 70m to the south of the property with further day roosts of common pipistrelle recorded in a dwelling 100m to the north. Further transient/day roosts are recorded associated with properties in Trenoweth over 500m away to the east.

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

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

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.

Building Description(s):

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.

Windridge is a bungalow with a pitched roof. A single-storey lean-to component is present on the rear aspect and a small porch is present on the front. The proposals are restricted to the rear eastern aspect of the property and therefore the porch will not be given further consideration in this report.

Main Dwelling

The main dwelling is rendered externally to a high standard with no gaps, cracks or cavities which could support roosting bats.

The uPVC windows, doors and soffits on the rear aspect of the main property are well-fitted with no gaps noted around apertures or behind boards. Guttering runs along the soffits at the eaves which would preclude direct fly-in access at this location. uPVC fascias at the gables are well-fitted with no gaps noted.

The pitched roof is covered with synthetic flat tiles which are well-fitted and in good condition. The ridge tiles are well-pointed with no gaps noted. A small chimney is present – this is in good condition with the flashing at the junction with the main roof well-fitted. There is an apparent minor gap beneath the ridge tiles at the gable on either end of the property. It should be noted that the proposals would tie in the new roof beneath the existing ridge line and would not therefore affect the existing ridge tiles. All other aspects of the roof verge are well-pointed and well-fitted.

Internally, the roof space is used for routine long-term storage. It is built around a timber framework with a ridge beam present. Breeze-block gable walls were well-pointed and the chimney was rendered to a high standard internally. Underfelting throughout the roof is in good condition with no tears or gaps noted. There is insulation between the joists and a full inspection was possible – no evidence of bats was identified.

Lean-to

The lean-to structure to the rear is rendered externally to a high standard with no gaps, cracks or cavities noted.

A wooden fascia runs along the eaves and gable – this is rotting in places creating subsequent gaps but they do not provide terminal apices due to their presence below the open corrugated sheets which overtop the eaves. These gaps were fully inspected with a video endoscope and no evidence of recent occupation could be identified.

The roof is covered with corrugated sheets and is open at the eaves – this could potentially provide nesting opportunities for small garden bird species but is unlikely to be suitable for use by roosting bats due to the materials, fly-in and the dimensions/character of any voids created. The guttering attached to the fascia would largely block the fly-in at this location. Where roof sheets overlap across the span, there are often minor gaps present but these appear largely superficial and relatively exposed. The terminal sheets are well pointed at the gables precluding any access potential at this location. Internally, the ceiling of the rooms below follow the angle of the roof indicating that there is no roof void present.

Summary

Potential roosting features associated with the property can therefore be summarised as:

- Gaps beneath the ridge tiles at the two gables – note no direct impact to the ridge of the existing property is proposed;
- Minor gaps between overlapping corrugated sheets on the lean-to.

Survey Limitations

Some aspects of the property could not be observed directly at height, for example gaps associated with ridge tiles at the gable.

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 between tiles and underfelting in the roof structure. However the lack of suitable access features to much of the roof would minimise the significance of this constraint.

No other limitations to the scope of the PRA were noted.

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 in the summary above.

It is considered that these residual risks can be proportionately controlled by a Precautionary Method of Works (PMW)

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 **must 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:

- Gaps beneath terminal ridge tiles which might be accessed from the gables;
- Minor gaps between overlapping corrugated roof sheets on the lean-to structure.

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.

The proposals would not affect any confirmed roosts, commuting routes or foraging habitat – therefore no habitat creation is required with regards to roosting bats.

In order to provide biodiversity enhancement, a bat box could be installed post-development. The box should be positioned on a gable at a height of at least 3m from the ground to minimise the risk of predation – ideally below the apex. 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 dominant species present 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

House sparrows have the potential to nest in features associated with the corrugated roof sheets on the lean-to structure. Additional minor opportunities may be found elsewhere on the structure, or within the associated garden.

The roof of the building therefore provides **suitable habitat** for use by nesting birds.

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 this 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. This includes adjacent parts of the building, as well as features within the garden.

Enhancement Opportunities

The installation of communal nest boxes supporting species such as house sparrow or other common garden bird species could secure enhancement for nesting birds. Consideration would need to be given to the location and aspect of these boxes to minimise disturbance and risk of predation, as well as avoid nuisance to residents.

Boxes should be mounted on the wall 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/

Survey Validity and Update

The data supporting this PRA are considered to provide an appropriate baseline for a planning application submitted within 12 months from the date of survey.

It is recommended that if there are significant changes in building condition, or if a Planning Application is not submitted by February 2026, then an updated walkover survey should be undertaken in order to identify any changes in the ecological assessment of the Site and update/amend the assessment accordingly.

APPENDIX 1
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PRECAUTIONARY METHOD STATEMENT WITH REGARDS TO BATS

The purpose of this Method Statement is to ensure that proposed 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

Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the "Habitat Regulations 2017"), bats are legally classified as a European Protected Species. This means it is an offence to:

- **Intentionally kill, injure, or capture bats.**
- **Intentionally damage or destroy any bat roost.**

Note: A "bat roost" refers to any structure or place used by bats for breeding or resting—even if bats are not always present, the location retains its legal protection.

In addition, Regulation 43 of the Habitat Regulations makes it illegal to disturb bats in any way that is likely to:

- **Hinder their ability to survive, breed, or care for their young,**
- **Disrupt hibernation or migration in species that rely on these activities, or**
- **Significantly affect the local number or distribution of bats.**

Further protection is provided under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000. Under these acts, it is an offence to:

- **Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, or obstruct any structure or place used by bats for shelter or protection.**
- **Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats while they are using any structure or place for shelter or protection.**

Construction activities, including the tying in of the roof lines, have potential to disturb or damage adjacent structures if not planned appropriately. Contractors should therefore be aware of **where bats could occur** in structural components of the building **near to the works area**.

There is small residual risk for individual bats to use roosting opportunities associated with the end ridge tiles of the property around the gables.

Care should be taken during works to ensure that the ridge is not disturbed, obstructed, or damaged. This may include a contractor briefing to ensure that those working on the property understand the requirement. Other measures such as tape or a physical barrier should be installed if deemed necessary.

Contractors should be aware of **where bats could occur** in structural components of the building **within the works area**.

Corrugated Sheets

Gaps between overlapping sheets have a negligible risk of supporting roosting bats, but careful removal would permit the control of this residual risk to ensure that in the unlikely event of a bat being present, they are not harmed.

Any sheets should be removed carefully, by hand, in such a way that in the unlikely event that a bat is present beneath, they are not crushed or harmed by the action. The underside of the sheet should be checked carefully to ensure no bats are clinging to the underside before being set aside.

Once all sheets are removed in this manner, works in this area can proceed without further constraint.

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

If bats are identified, works should cease and the **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
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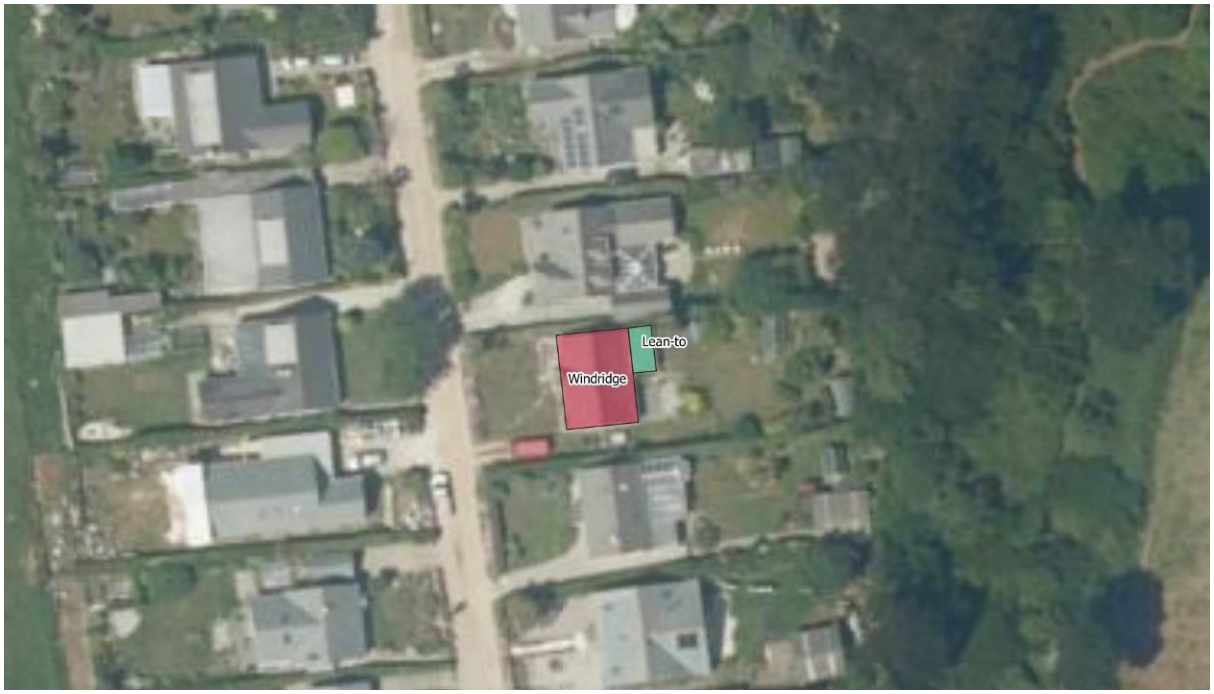
LOCATION PLAN AND PHOTOGRAPHS

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 main Windridge structure indicated by the red wash with the lean-to roof indicated to the rear in the green wash. The porch on the front aspect of the property would not be impacted by the works and is not indicated for clarity.

Photograph 1: Showing rear aspect of the property – the lean-to structure is just visible on the LHS

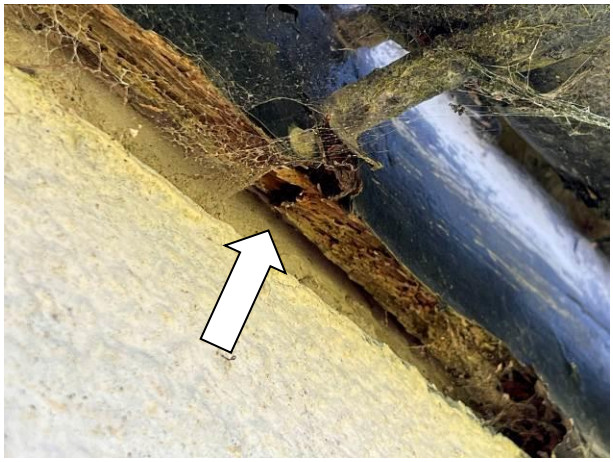
Photograph 2: Showing the uPVC soffit running along the eaves of the rear aspect of the main dwelling

Photograph 3: Showing the uPVC fascia on the gable of the property

Photograph 4: Showing the tightly fitted roof tiles and ridge

Photograph 5: Showing the gap under the terminal ridge tile at the gable. The gap behind the uPVC fascia below is too broad to provide suitable roosting dimensions for bats.

Photograph 6: Showing the lean-to structure viewed from the rear garden.



Photograph 7: Showing the minor areas of rot in the wooden fascia of the lean-to structure.

Photograph 8: Showing the gaps between overlapping corrugated sheets on the lean-to stucture

Photograph 9: Showing the interior of the loft space

Photograph 10: Showing the interior room within the lean-to structure with the sloping ceiling mirroring the pitch of the roof above.