BAT PRESENCE/ABSENCE SURVEYS (PAS)

ATLANTIC VIEW,
ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY

Client: *Truan Hicks*

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

Contact: *ios.ecology@gmail.com*

Executive Summary

Overview
One Presence/Absence Survey (PAS) was undertaken on the property known as Atlantic View to assess the use of the structure by roosting bats in advance of proposed re-roofing and renovation works. This was undertaken to provide an evidence base which meets Best Practice Guidance following the initial findings of the Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) report.
Results
The survey did not identify any bats emerging from the property. The survey generally recorded low activity levels of common pipistrelle bats in the vicinity of the site. No other bat species were recorded.
Conclusion
The survey evidence accords with the Best Practice Guidance requirements to conclude 'Probable Absence' of bats. No further surveys are required and there is no requirement for a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML).
Mitigation Strategy
As no roosts were identified, there is no requirement for mitigation measures to be built into the development. A precautionary method of working would represent good practice during re-roofing and renovation works – outline recommendations are provided in this report.
Planning Recommendations
The PRA and PAS reports together provide an appropriate ecological baseline for the purposes of assessing the Planning Application. No further surveys would be required.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background to Survey

The property under consideration is the residential dwelling known as Atlantic View which is part of a small settlement of dwellings with extensive gardens on High Lane. This location is central within the island of St Mary's in the Isles of Scilly.

The proposed works involve comprehensive renovation works to the existing property.

A Preliminary Roosting Assessment (PRA) was carried out in June 2025 - this assessment identified Low Potential for use by roosting bats.

The PRA report stated that a further PAS survey would be required to provide an evidence base sufficient to identify the status of the building with regards to bats, and inform any mitigation measures required to ensure legislative compliance. This PAS report provides the results of the recommended survey. It should be read alongside the PRA report to provide a comprehensive assessment of the building with regards to roosting bats.

1.2. Survey Objectives

In accordance with the Best Practice Guidance[1] for a Low Potential building, the structure was subject to a single PAS survey with three surveyors and three Night Vision Assistance (NVA) cameras positioned to cover all aspects of the property where suitable features for use by roosting bats were identified.

The overall objective is to provide a comprehensive ecological baseline upon which to assess the potential impact of the proposed works to roosting bats.

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

2. Survey Methodology

2.1. Surveyor Details

The surveys were led by Darren Hart. Darren has undertaken Professional Bat Licence training and is a Level 2 Licenced Bat Worker with experience in undertaking emergence, re-entry and activity surveys.

Additional surveyors are experienced in undertaking emergence and re-entry surveys and worked under the supervision of the Licenced Bat Worker.

The NVA review, assessment and reporting were completed by James Faulconbridge, trading as IOS Ecology. James is a Level 2 Licenced Bat Worker with over 15 years' experience in undertaking ecological assessments to support Planning and Development.

2.2. Survey Methodology

The dusk emergence survey was conducted following Best Practice methodology for bat surveys.

The PAS survey was carried out on the evening of 10th July 2025.

The dusk emergence survey commenced from approximately 15 minutes before sunset and continued until 90 minutes after sunset. The survey was undertaken with regard for the appropriate weather conditions (≥10°C at sunset, no/light rain or wind).

Frequency division bat detectors were used to detect and record all bat passes. The surveyor recorded metadata including the time the pass occurred, the behaviour observed (foraging/commuting) and the species of bat observed. Results from the bat detector recordings were analysed using BatSound/Analook sonogram analysis computer software.

Three NVAs were used to provide comprehensive coverage of the potential access or roosting features – these were two Nightfox Whisker and one Nightfox Red infra-red camera with additional infra-red torches. Footage from these NVAs was watched back to verify or update the survey results confirmed in the field.

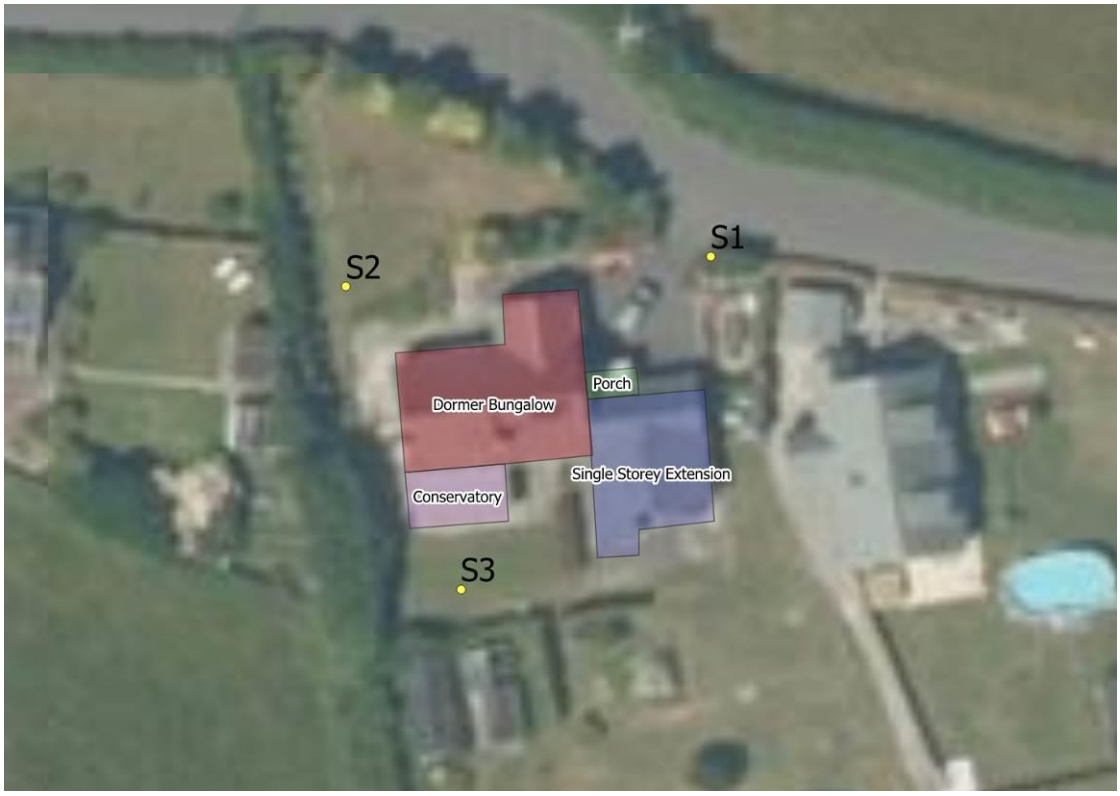
2.3. Survey Validity and Update

Bats are transient in their use of habitats such as these, and apparently minor changes in condition or use of the building can affect suitability. However, in the absence of significant changes in condition or building use, the nature and character of the site suggest that the results of the PAS surveys can be considered proportionately valid to support a Planning Application or works under Permitted Development rights until the next active season in May 2026.

3. Results

3.1. Surveyor Positions

In order to ensure that the building received a survey effort of a single bat survey for a Low Potential building (in line with the Best Practice Guidance), three surveyor positions each with an NVA were deployed. These are identified in Map 01 below.



Map 01 – showing the surveyor position (S1 – S3).

3.2. PAS Survey

3.2.1. Survey Conditions

The dusk survey was undertaken on 10th July 2025. The survey commenced at 9:18pm, approximately 15 minutes before sunset at 9:33pm. It was completed at 11:03pm.

The temperature throughout the survey was 17°c - the evening was overcast with light sea mist blowing through at times – this wasn't sufficient to affect visibility of the structures. The evening was still and dry.

3.2.2. Survey Results - Emergence

No emergence activity was recorded during the survey.

3.2.3. Survey Results - Activity

No species other than common pipistrelle bats were identified during the survey.

The surveyors positioned to the south and west of the property recorded a single bat flying across the site from east-west at 10:13pm and another bat flying west-east at 10:28pm. Both of these were seen to fly from offsite. Intermittent foraging was recorded by the surveyor to the north of property from 10:31pm until 10:48pm.

3.3. Limitations and Constraints

3.3.1. Seasonal Timing

The survey was undertaken within the main active season in 2025 – this conforms with the recommended survey timings within the Good Practice Guidelines.

3.3.2. Survey Conditions

The weather conditions were optimal with no other adverse conditions which might be expected to affect bat behaviour. The light sea mist did not affect the visibility within the site due to the proximity of the surveyors to the building under consideration – this can be verified from the NVA screenshots provided in Appendix 2.

3.3.3. Visibility and Coverage

The surveys were comprehensive with regards to surveyor visibility.

3.3.4. NVA Footage

The NV camera Field of Vision (FOV) covered the areas under survey – see Appendix 2 for example screenshots from the footage.

4. Mitigation Strategy

4.1. EPSML Requirement

The project does not require a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) to proceed.

4.2. Precautionary Method of Works

As individual bats can be exploratory or make transient use of roosting opportunities, it is important that contractors undertaking the proposed works are aware of the low risk for bats to be encountered - works should therefore proceed with appropriate caution and vigilance.

A Precautionary Method of Works (PMW) is outlined in Appendix 1 of this document and should be followed by contractors undertaking works.

4.3. Timing of Works

4.3.1. Bats

The results of the PRA/PAS surveys do not indicate that there is a requirement for seasonal constraints on the timing of works with regards to bats.

4.3.2. Nesting Birds

Assessment of potential for nesting birds, and appropriate mitigation measures, are provided in the PRA report. These recommendations are not repeated here, for brevity, but remain valid and should be addressed in any appropriate Planning Conditions and work practices.

4.4. Habitat Enhancement / Mitigation

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

If the applicant wished to provide enhancement measures, the installation of a bat box on the western gable of the property would have a good likelihood of occupation. 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 and easy to construct from appropriate timber using the plans provided at:

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

Appendix 1 - 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

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 existing building.** The generic recommendations relating to each type of feature are outlined below – locations where these features occur are listed in the PRA report**:**

Fascias/Soffits

There are intermittent gaps where the fascias and soffits meets the wall. Where these are to be removed or impacted as part of the proposed works, they should be carefully removed and the gaps behind exposed in such a way that, in the unlikely event that bats are present, they are not injured or killed by the action.

Once these areas are fully exposed, they can be visually inspected by contractors. Any cavities exposed by this action should also be carefully inspected and features dismantled by hand where necessary until absence of bats can be confidently confirmed.

Ridge Tiles with Missing Pointing

If any ridge or roof tiles are lifted or damaged or have missing pointing; they should be removed carefully and the undersides inspected in such a way that, in the unlikely event that bats are present, they are not injured or killed by the action.

Lifted Flashing

There is a section of lifted flashing around the porch which should be peeled back carefully to expose the cavity behind. This should be done in such a way that, if there are bats present, they would not be injured or killed by the action.

Once these areas are fully exposed, they can be visually inspected by contractors.

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 or suspected, 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 – NVA Screenshots

NVA1 – showing a screenshot from the Nightfox Red at position S1.

NVA2 – showing footage from the Nightfox Whisker on position S2.

NVA3 – showing a screenshot from the Nightfox Whisker at position S3. The NVA did not comprehensively cover the conservatory due to the vegetation; however no suitable features for use by roosting bats were identified on this structure.