PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

4 PORTHCRESSA TERRACE, HUGH TOWN, ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY

Client: *Jennie Woodcock*

Our reference: *23-10-1*

Planning reference: *Produced in advance of submission*

Report date: *28th October 2023*

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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. This assessment relates solely to those aspects of the structure within the scope of the survey – it does not represent a comprehensive assessment of the property. Whilst a negligible potential is concluded, it is noted that there is a small chance of opportunistic/transient use of individual discreet features. This potential is not sufficient to justify further surveys or significant constraints to works, 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 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 specific methodology is provided in Appendix 1. A Planning Condition requiring compliance with the Precautionary Method of Works (PMW) outlined in Appendix 1 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. If the applicant wishes to provide biodiversity enhancement, bat boxes could be erected on the gable of the dwelling. Guidance on suitable specifications is provided.

Nesting Birds – Results and Findings
There is a minor risk of individual bird species finding occasional nesting habitat associated with the building or proximate vegetation, such as the adjacent apple tree, though no evidence was noted at the time of survey.
Nesting Birds - Recommendations
Works should take account of the minor residual risk of species such as wren or robin making use of nesting opportunities during the breeding season. If the applicant wishes to provide biodiversity enhancement, nest boxes could be erected either on the dwelling or within the residential garden. 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 90545 10457	Report produced in support of application

Planning application address:

4 Porthcressa Terrace, Hugh Town, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly

Proposed development:

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

1) The removal of existing flat-roof extension to the east of the main property;
2) Re-roofing the eastern aspect of the property;
3) Construction of a new two-storey extension on the eastern aspect of the property which would tie in with the existing roof.

Building references:

The structures under assessment comprise three distinct elements:

- Main House;
- Flat-roof extension;
- Water Tank enclosure.

These structural elements are identified in the plans provided in Appendix 1.

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 19th October 2023 in accordance with relevant Best Practice methodology[2].

Local and Landscape Setting:

The property is situated within the residential area of Hugh Town in St Mary's in the Isles of Scilly.

The land use immediately surrounding the property comprises dense residential development with generally small gardens although there is a more developed areas of green space to the immediate west of the properties. The shoreline of Porthcressa Beach lies close to the south of the property with the green space of the allotments, playground and setting of Buzza Tower close by to the east.

Three 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

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

dormer windows.

Building Description(s):

The property is an end-terrace, two-storey, residential house. It comprises the main dwelling, along with a flat-roof extension on the eastern aspect. A water tank enclosure is situated on the edge of the flat-roof extension. These distinct structural components are identified in Map 2 in Appendix 1.

Main House

The main dwelling is brick-built with a pitched, wet-laid scantle tiled roof on the eastern aspect. The western aspect of the roof has been replaced with dry-laid slate tiles and is of more recent construction. The proposals would not directly or indirectly impact the western aspect of the property, therefore no further consideration of this aspect is provided in this assessment.

The roof tiles on the eastern aspect are generally in good condition and any gaps present are too small for access by bats. Minor gaps occur at the apex of the dormer and at a ridge tile on the southern edge of the aspect – these appear superficial through inspection with close-focusing binoculars. The join between the roof of this property and the adjacent 3 Porthcressa Terrace is marked by a low concrete parapet – no gaps or other features are noted associated with this feature. There is a concrete chimney at each edge of the roof under consideration – these appear well-sealed and in good condition.

The loft space was inspected throughout – this is a small space built above the collar of the A-frame timbers with the living space built into the lower part of the roof. The loft is boarded out above the rafters and appears very well sealed. There is no insulation present between the joists. The loft space was densely cobwebbed with dusty, old webs indicating no recent flight by bats within the space. A full inspection of the floor identified no droppings or other evidence of bats – individual small rodent droppings were noted.

As the loft space is well-boarded and no evidence of internal roosting was identified, the potential for indirect impacts of works on the eastern aspect affecting un-surveyed features on the western aspect does not require further consideration.

There is a central dormer window within the roof – this has well-sealed hanging tiles on the sides with a scantle-tiled pitched roof above. The valley joining the pitches appears generally well sealed with lead flashing though minor lifted gaps occur both here and below the window. The gap beneath the window has been sealed with expanding foam in the past – this appears to provide a tight seal to this cavity at present, but the condition could change due to the nature of the filling.

Minor gaps occur behind the drop tiles on the southern gable of the building – these appear superficial through inspection with a torch and close-focusing binoculars.

The fascias on the eastern aspect have minor gaps but the tie-in with the flat-roof extension immediately below this would prevent a clear fly-in and would significantly reduce the suitability of a feature here.

No evidence of current or historic use by bats or nesting birds was identified during the survey.

Flat-roof extension

A flat-roof single-storey extension is attached on the eastern aspect of the property. This is block-built and uPVC-clad in places. No features were noted associated either with the pointing or the cladding. Window frames are well-fitted with no gaps noted at the edges.

The fascias throughout the flat-roof extension are well-fitted and tightly sealed. In places, there are small gaps behind the roof cladding where it overlaps the top of the wall; however the guttering attached to the fascia below would prevent a clear fly-in and would significantly

reduce the suitability of a feature here.

Water Tank

There is a flat-roofed water tank enclosure attached on the eastern edge of the flat-roof extension. This also houses a small shed/garage unit which was accessed and inspected and found to provide no roosting opportunities.

The structure did not have any gaps, cracks or other features which would provide roosting opportunities for bats.

Garden Shed

A small, pre-fab timber garden shed is present within the footprint of the proposed development and is likely to either be moved or removed to facilitate the works.

It was fully inspected and no suitable roosting opportunities for bats were noted.

Survey Limitations

It was not possible to comprehensively inspect all features such as lead flashing around the dormer windows due to the lack of access at height. However the majority of the relevant features could be fully inspected with binoculars. This residual limitation can be addressed through a Precautionary Method of Works (PMW).

There were no other 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

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.

This assessment relates only to the eastern aspect of the main dwelling; and the flat-roof extensions.

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. 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:

- The lead flashing associated with the dormer window;
- Any minor gaps beneath roof/ridge tiles which may be present, or may arise due to change of condition between the time of survey and the time of works;
- Minor superficial gaps associated with drop-tiles on the southern gable;
- Fascias or overlapping roof coverings with minor gaps which are obstructed by guttering.

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.

If the applicant wishes to provide biodiversity enhancement, the position of the southern gable facing onto the garden with an apple tree 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 dominant species present on the island and the most likely species to use the environs for foraging and roosting. The proximity of the gable to existing vegetation would secure a vegetated fly-in/out habitat.

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

It is considered that the relevant structures described in this report provide **low potential** for use by nesting birds; however there is a minor residual risk of species such as wren or robin making use of minor niches to build a nest. There is also a risk of nesting birds within adjacent vegetation – especially the apple tree in close proximity on the southern gable.

Recommendations and Justification (Birds):

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 unlikely 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 vegetation within the garden and boundary hedges.

Enhancement Opportunities

There is no requirement to mitigate for loss of nesting habitat for breeding birds as no nesting habitat would be removed; however 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.

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:** 28th October 2023

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

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 roof to be replaced:**

Lead Flashing

Minor lifted sections occur within the lead flashing where the dormers meet the roof tiles below, and in the valley between the pitch of the dormer and the adjacent roof.

If these are to be removed as part of the works, locations where the flashing is lifted should be exposed carefully such that if any bats were present behind the lifted element, they would not be crushed or otherwise injured by the operation. Contractors should satisfy themselves that no bats are present before proceeding with works in these areas.

Dormer Window Frame

There is a minor gap below the dormer window frame which appears sealed at the time of survey, but may deteriorate before works take place. This area should be fully inspected visually before works commence in order to confirm that no bats are present.

Roof/Ridge Tiles

There are minor gaps noted beneath individual ridge tiles on the apex of the dormer and the southern edge of the main roof, close to the chimney. These appear superficial but it is possible that minor niches may occur. In addition, further gaps may appear if the condition of tiles deteriorates between the time of survey and the time of works.

The following protocol also applies to the drop tiles on the southern gable.

If there are gaps beneath tiles, these tiles and those adjacent to them should be lifted carefully in such a way that if any bats were roosting beneath, they would not be crushed or injured by the action. The undersides of the tiles should be carefully checked before being set aside. Contractors should satisfy themselves that no bats are present before proceeding with works in these areas.

Fascias

There are occasional gaps where the fascias and the overhang of the roof covering meet the walls. Where these are to be removed or impacted as part of the proposed works, they should be carefully removed and the gaps behind them exposed in such a way that, in the highly unlikely event that bats are present, they are not injured or killed by the action. Contractors should satisfy themselves that no bats are present before proceeding with works in these areas.

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
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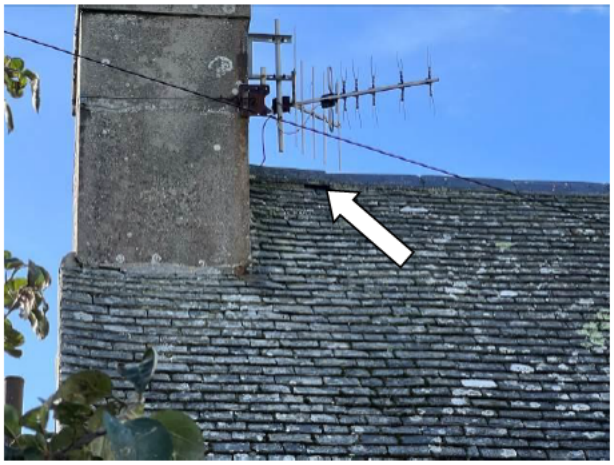
LOCATION PLAN AND PHOTOGRAPHS

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 different elements of the buildings.

Photograph 1: Showing the property – the main property of 4 Porthcressa Terrace spans the length between the two chimneys on the left-hand side The flat-roof extension can be seen in the foreground with the enclosed water-tank.



Photograph 2: Showing the roof structure – this is largely well-sealed with no gaps noted; however occasional minor gaps are noted including the gap in the ridge highlighted.

Photograph 3: Showing the southern gable of the property – there superficial gaps behind the drop-tiles on the eastern aspect can be seen on the right-hand side. Those on the western aspect would not be affected.

Photograph 4: Showing the loft space with boarding visible between the rafters.

Photograph 5: Showing the flat-roof extension with uPVC cladding.

Photograph 6: Showing the enclosed water tank.