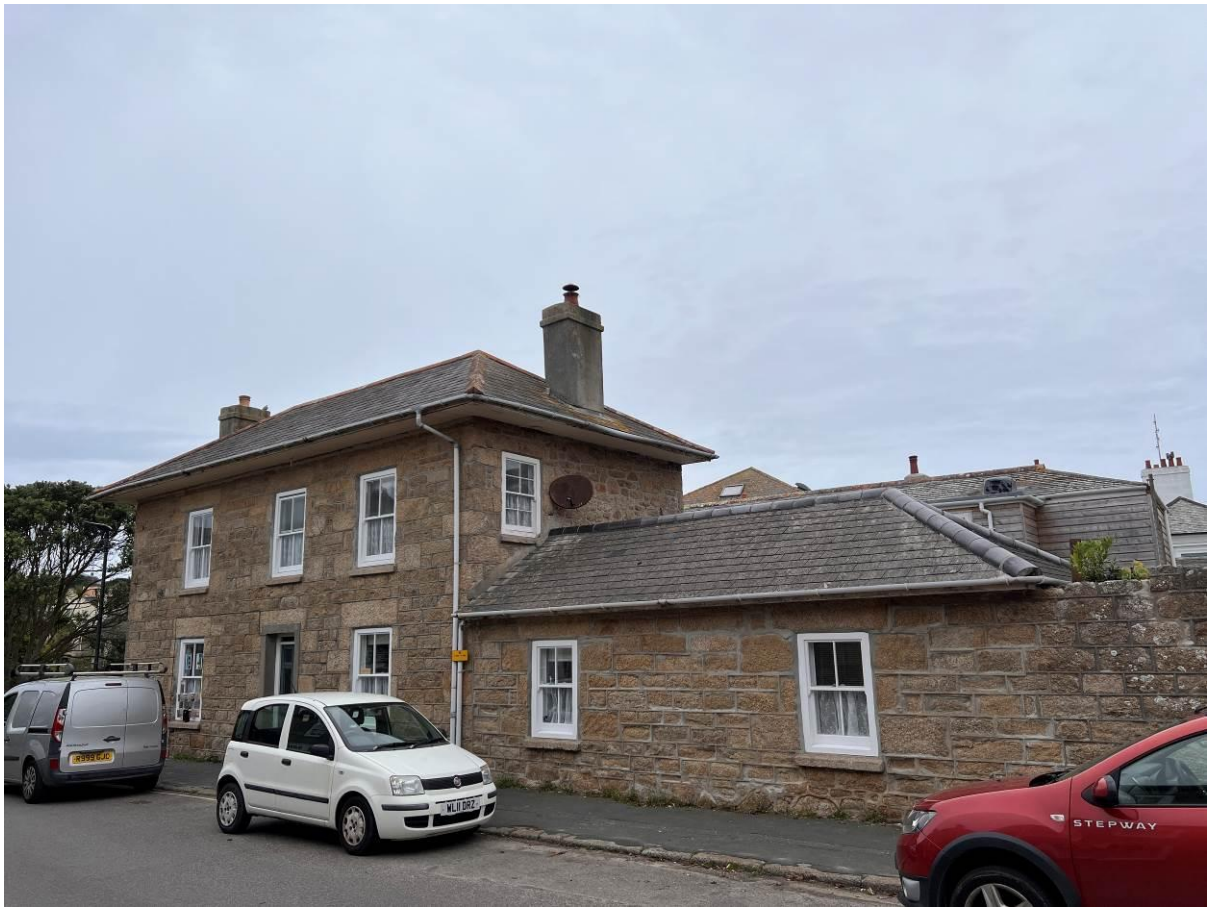
PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

POLTAIR,
ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY



Client: *Wright Construction*

Our reference: *25-10-1*

Planning reference: *Produced in advance of submission*

Report date: *27th October 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 discrete features associated with gaps where pointing is missing from ridge tiles and where the boarding of the deep soffit/fascia is damaged. 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 of Works (PMW) when undertaking specified works – this is provided in Appendix 1. 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 suitable habitat for bird species such as house sparrow and starling associated with discrete 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 on the dwelling 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 90399 10525	Report produced in support of application

Planning application address:

Poltair, Church Street, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly

Proposed development:

The proposals for the property were outlined by the client upon instruction of the survey and should correspond with the details included in the Planning Application submitted alongside this report. These involve:

- The replacement of the existing roof covering with natural slate tiles;
- Replacement of the existing soffits and fascia of the main building.

Building references:

The building comprises a two-storey hipped roof building referred to as the Main House; with a single-storey extension to the east referred to as the Single-Storey Extension. These 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 23rd October 2025 in accordance with relevant Best Practice methodology[2].

Local and Landscape Setting:

The property is an end-terrace house located on Church Street in Hugh Town. The road runs to the south and west of the property with a small courtyard garden to the north-east. The property is attached on its northern aspect, but is closely surrounded by further residential development to the east and south. To the west of the property lies the road, with the Parade Gardens beyond.

The central location of the property within Hugh Town means that the dominant local land use is built environment. This is predominantly residential with small-scale commercial businesses also represented. This densely built environment extends around 300m to the west and around 500m to the east. Some of these adjacent properties have associated areas of garden or green space, but the centre of Hugh Town is relatively densely developed. The location of the building is within the narrowest part of Hugh Town with Town Beach and Porthcressa lying 35m to the north and 90m to the south respectively.

The closest areas of green space are the Parade Gardens <10m to the west; and the grassed area adjacent to Porthcressa Beach lying to the south-west. Both of these areas are dominated by close-mown amenity grassland with ornamental planting, reflecting their popularity with visitors and fundamentally municipal function. The closest areas of semi-natural habitat are associated with the Garrison approximately 250m to the west; and the land around Buzza

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

Tower approximately 250m to the south-east.

The desk study sourced records from the Isles of Scilly Bat Group. This showed that no species of bat had previously been recorded roosting on the site itself – however in 2023 a common pipistrelle day roost was confirmed between the stone wall and the fascia in the property which lies 15m to the north.

Six 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 and behind fascia boards in properties within the town.

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.

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.

Main House

The main house is a two-storey granite-built residential property with a hipped roof.

The pointing on the walls of the main property is in good condition with no gaps or cavities noted. Similarly, the timber window and door frames are well-fitted in their apertures.

There are broad soffits at the eaves with fascias and guttering attached. These are well-sealed at the junction with the granite stonework, though gaps occur where boards are damaged or where the fascia is poorly fitted to the soffit at the edges. Whilst these could potentially provide access for bats and nesting birds, the situation of the gaps away from the junction with the wall makes them unlikely to offer roosting opportunities aside from potential for access to the roof itself.

The hipped roof is tiled with flat slate-effect asbestos tiles – these are well-fitted throughout. The hip ridge tiles are well-fitted and pointed at the termination at the eaves. The ridge tiles on the roof are also well-fitted, though gaps in the pointing were noted on the northern aspect – these appear superficial but may provide access to minor roosting opportunities.

The chimneys are rendered and in good condition with no gaps or cracks noted in the covering. There is lead flashing at the junction between the chimney and the roof itself – this appears well-fitted with minor lifted elements on the southern chimney – this appears superficial.

Internally, the loft space is used for routine storage and the floor is partially boarded out with insulation below. There is tar paper above the rafters – this is in poor condition with multiple gaps and tears. Internally visible granite work is well-pointed internally at the chimneys. No evidence of bats or rodents was identified during the internal inspection.

Single-Storey Extension

The single-storey extension has a pitched, partially-hipped roof and is of the same granite construction as the main house.

The stonework is well-pointed and the uPVC and timber windows are well-fitted in their frames.

The roof is covered with flat slate-effect asbestos tiles – these are well-fitted throughout. The ridge and hip ridge tiles are well-fitted and well-pointed, including at the termination at the

eaves.

The soffits and fascias are well-fitted throughout – gaps behind the fascia on the northern aspect are too wide to be suitable for use by roosting bats as features in their own right; and are sealed at the apex precluding access to the roof structure.

Minor gaps occur at the roof verge on the northern aspect of the structure where the roofline extends where the footprint of the building steps out – these gaps appear superficial offering minor access to the gaps beneath the tiles but were blocked with cobwebs and debris at the time of survey. This location was inspected with a video endoscope and no evidence of current or historic use by roosting bats was noted.

Internally, the single-storey extension is open to the apex through much of the space with a sealed void present above the tie-beam closer to the main house.

Survey Limitations

It was not possible to comprehensively inspect a small portion of the pitch on the northern aspect of the roof due to the end-terrace nature of the property – however the majority of this could be viewed from vantage points to the east and west with binoculars, and the overall condition of the roof coupled with the evidence from the internal inspections make it unlikely that any unrecorded features occur on this aspect.

It was not possible to access the sealed void in the single-storey extension; however the lack of external access opportunities in the well-maintained roof make it unlikely that any bats would be able to access interior features in this location.

It was not possible to inspect at height features noted associated with the roof structure or fascias/soffits of the two-storey main house.

The timing of the survey in mid-October is considered appropriate to identify evidence of more significant roosts from the previous season; and to assess the suitability of structural features present on the property.

No other significant constraints on access or inspection 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.

Minor features which might be considered to offer roosting opportunities were identified – these are given consideration below:

- The wide soffits are well-fitted to the stonework and any gaps noted are in the extended space away from the walls and do not form these crevice features. Whilst features associated with gaps in fascias are often used by bats on the islands; all known confirmed roosts are associated with gaps between the stonework and the fascia which offer crevice roosting opportunities for common pipistrelle, or access to roosting opportunities within wet-laid scantle tiles which can be accessed from these features. The asbestos slates with tar paper present in Poltair, are considered unlikely to provide roosting opportunities for this species based on the structural features present and the typical roosts used within the islands.
- Those features associated with missing pointing around the ridge and the minor lifted flashing on the chimney on the southern aspect appear to be superficial and are therefore unlikely to offer access to potential roosting features. The fly-in access for bats in these locations would be poor with significant obstruction from the roof structure below on entry and exit from the features.

- The gap in the verge on the single-storey extension was filled with cobwebs and was inspected fully with a video endoscope – no evidence of recent or historic occupation by roosting bats was noted.

In conclusion, the following considerations recommend the assessment of negligible potential:

- Poltair is present within a built-up nature of the location with abundant suitable buildings offering ideal roosting opportunities within the local environs in the centre of Hugh Town;
- The characteristics of the minor features noted and their structural position within the building either appear superficial, or do not conform with the suitable crevice-forming characteristics favoured by common pipistrelle bats;
- The absence of any evidence of occupation by bats, as ascertained via a video endoscope inspection where this was possible.

It is therefore identified that there is a very low residual risk of opportunistic/transient use of the features noted in the summary above but these would not justify the delays and additional costs associated with further surveys. 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 ridge tiles where pointing is missing;
- Spaces within the soffit accessed through damage features in this part of the structure;
- Gaps behind flashing where the chimney abuts the roof on the southern aspect.

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 beneath the eaves at a height of at least 3m from the ground to minimise the risk of predation – ideally on the western aspect facing the Parade Gardens. 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

No evidence of nesting birds was identified associated with the property; however this was undertaken outside of the breeding season in October 2025 and access to the damaged soffits may allow species such as house sparrow and starling to find nesting opportunities within the building.

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.

Enhancement Opportunities

The installation of communal nest boxes supporting species such as house sparrow or starling 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 below the eaves 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.

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 October 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 - 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 buildings:**

Fascias/Soffits

There are intermittent gaps where the fascias and soffits are damaged. 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 including features around the wall plate and lower run of tiles should also be carefully inspected and features dismantled by hand where necessary until absence of bats can be confidently confirmed.

Lead Flashing

Where lead flashing is lifted or has gaps which could permit access for bats, this should be removed carefully, by hand in such a way that any bats present beneath would not be crushed or injured by the action. This involves carefully lifting and peeling back the flashing until all concealed cavities behind are exposed. Proceed with works if no bats or signs are observed, maintaining vigilance.

Roof Tiles

Where there is missing pointing around the ridge tiles, 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.

- Lift the tile in a controlled manner, supporting it as it clears the battens;
- Check the tile's underside and the immediate void below for bats or signs such as droppings, staining, scratch marks;
- Remove adjacent tiles one at a time with extra care; avoid dragging tiles across gaps and check for bats or signs of bat presence as above;
- Proceed with works if no bats or signs are observed, maintaining vigilance.

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
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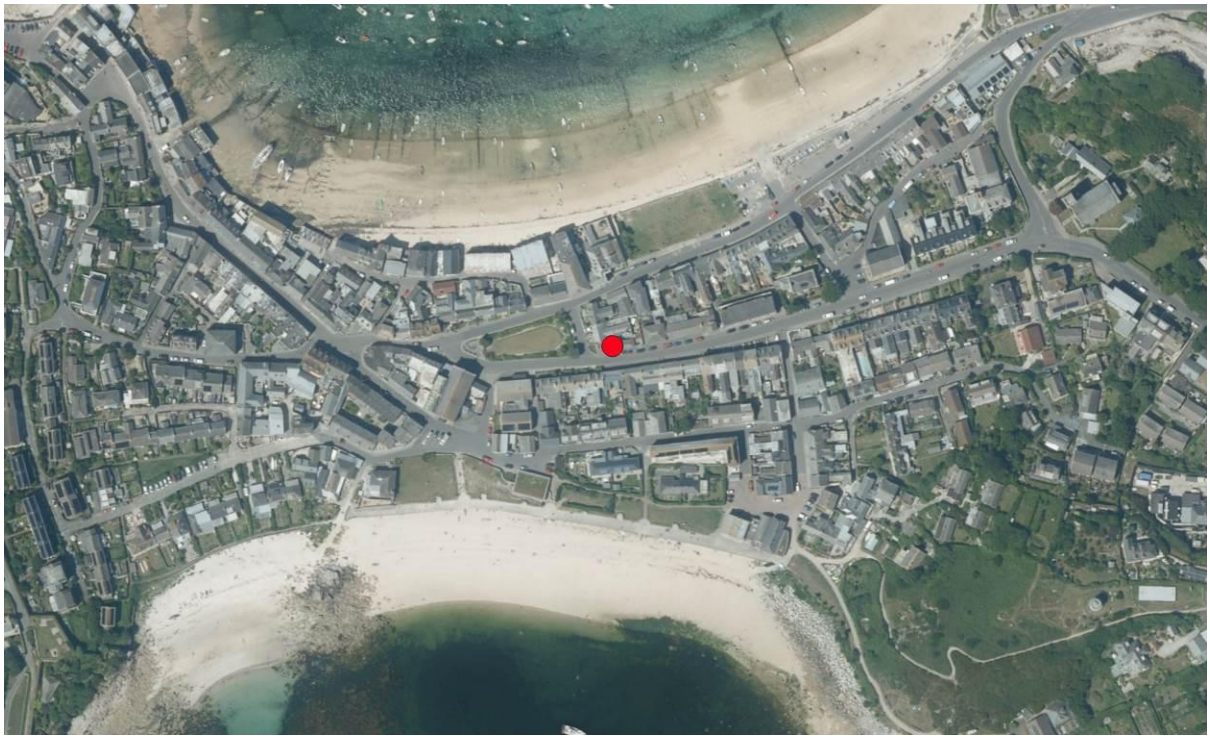
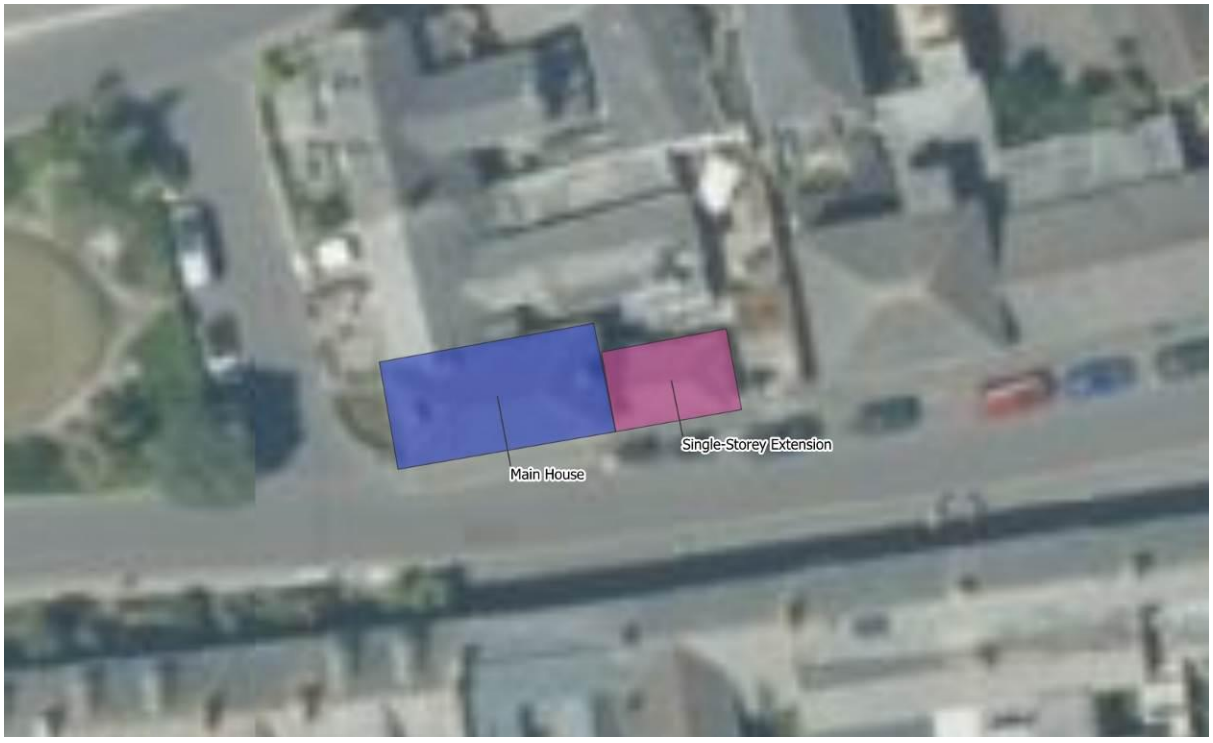
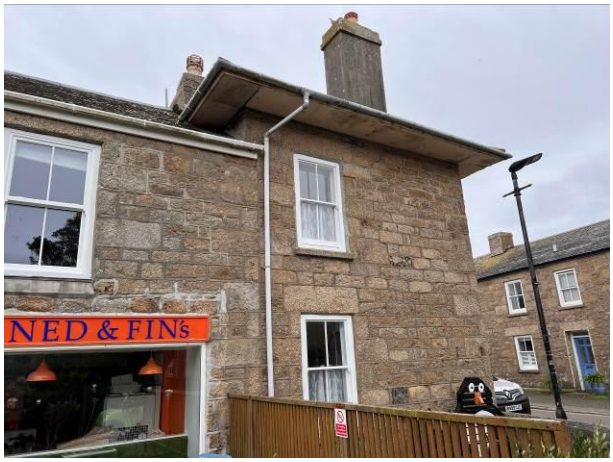
LOCATION PLAN AND PHOTOGRAPHS



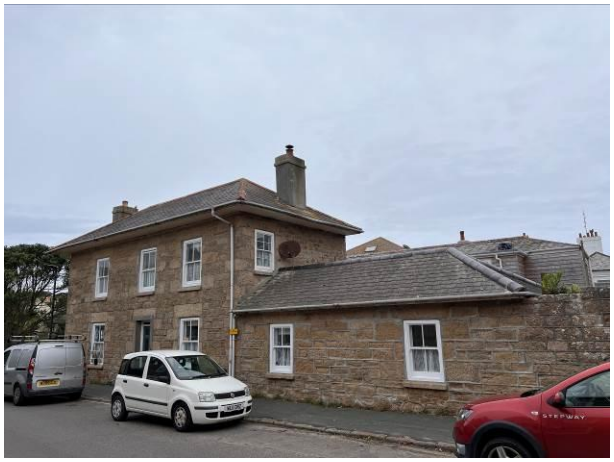
Map 01 – Illustrating location of property within the local environs (red circle). Reproduced in accordance with Google's Fair Use Policy.



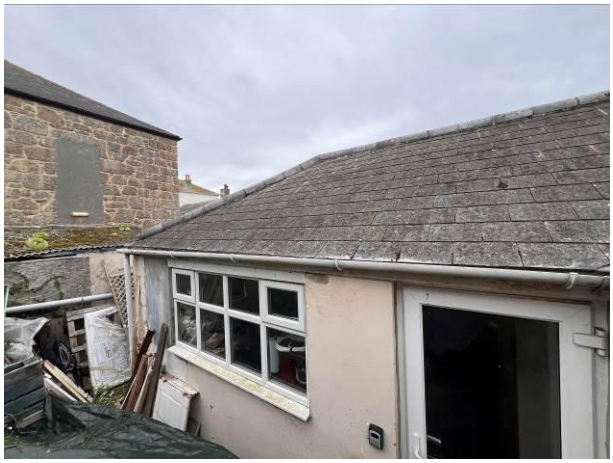
Map 02 – Showing the distinct structural components of the property.



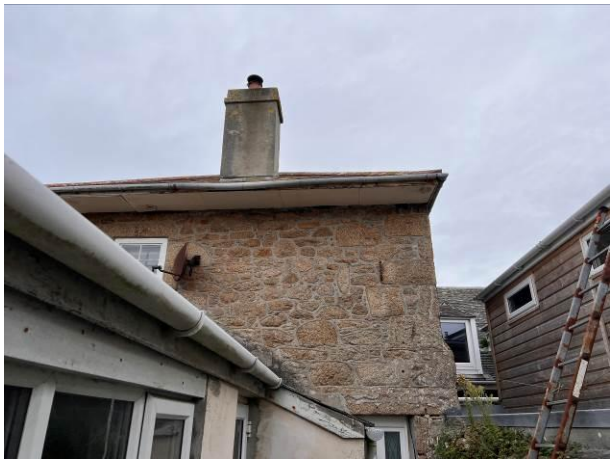
Photograph 1: Showing the western aspect of the property – Poltair is the structure on the RHS of the wooden fence.



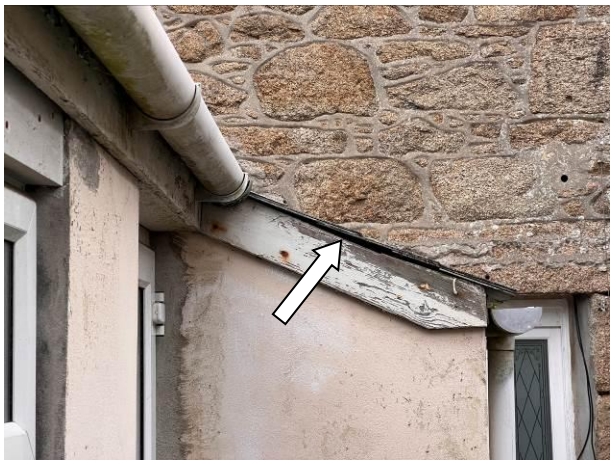
Photograph 2: Showing the southern aspect of the property with the main house visible on the LHS and the single-storey extension on the RHS.



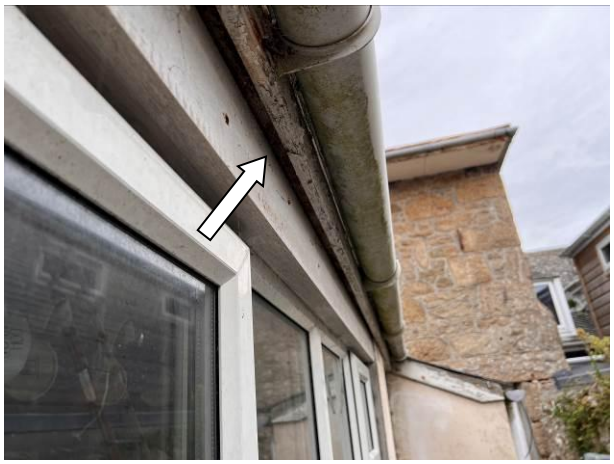
Photograph 3: Showing the northern aspect of the single-storey extension.



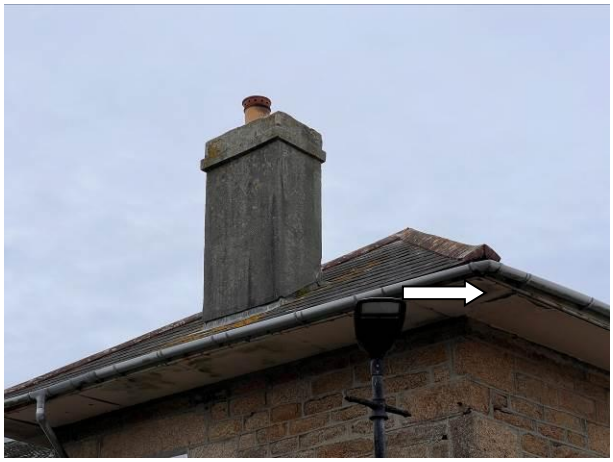
Photograph 4: Showing the eastern aspect of the main house with the single-storey extension in the foreground.



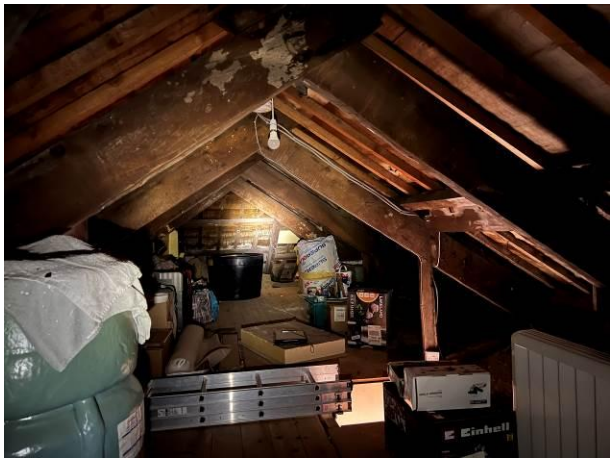
Photograph 5: Showing the gap in the verge on the single-storey extension where the footprint of the building extends out.



Photograph 6: Showing the fascia on the single-storey extension with gaps (indicated) which are too wide to provide roosting opportunities for crevice-dwelling species.



Photograph 7: Showing an example of damage to the soffit away from the junction with the main building wall.



Photograph 8: Showing the interior of the loft space of the main house, used for routine storage.