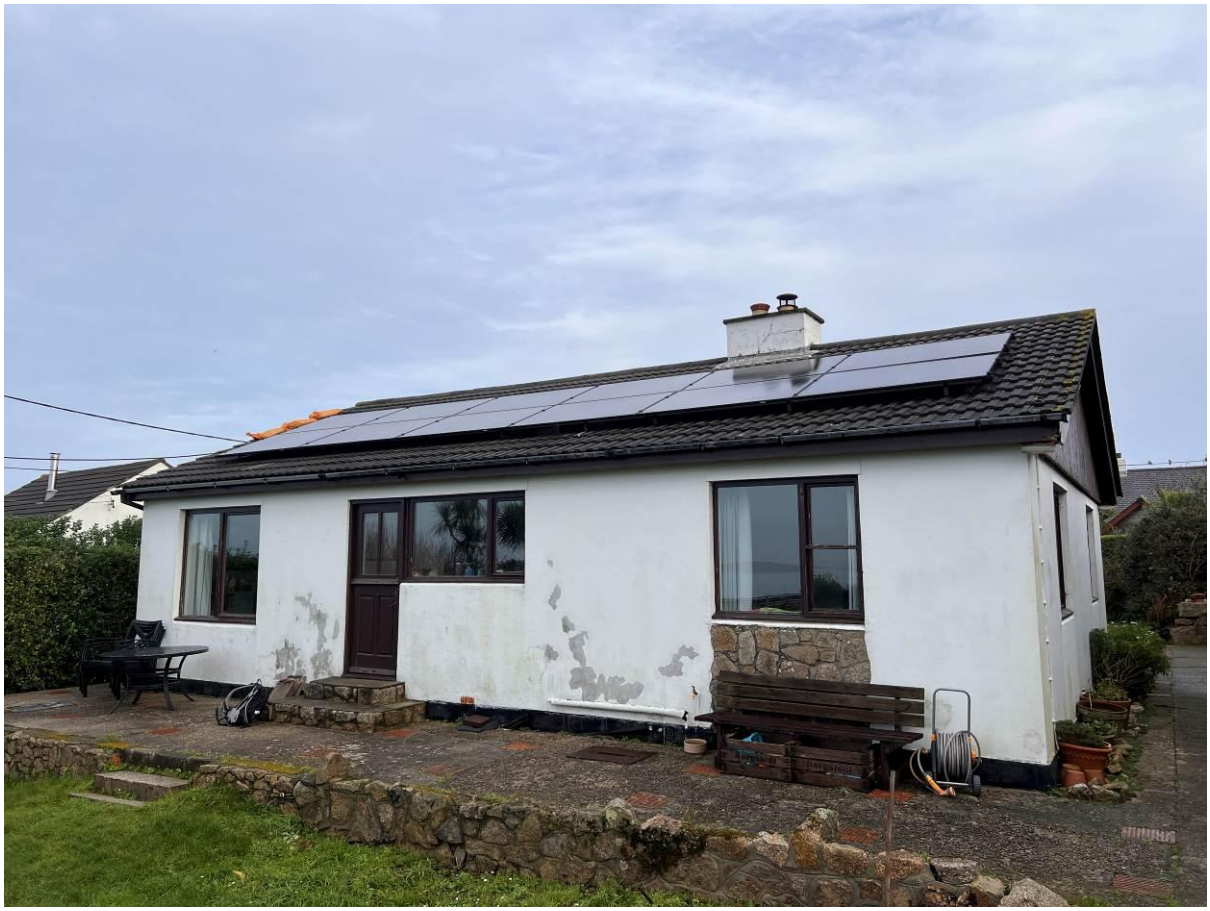
# PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

# ESPERANCE, MCFARLAND'S DOWN, ST MARY'S, ISLES OF SCILLY



***Client:*** *Abigail & Matthew Meaton*

***Our reference:*** *25-12-2*

***Planning reference:*** *Produced in advance of submission*

***Report date:*** *20th January 2026*

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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**.<br><br>Whilst a negligible potential is concluded overall, it is noted that there is a small chance of opportunistic/transient use of a single discrete feature if its condition changes – this residual risk can be controlled with a suitable method of works.<br><br>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. |
| **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.<br><br>Standard good practice and vigilance should be observed by the contractors undertaking the works.<br><br>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** |
|---|
| Evidence of nesting was confirmed in the gap in the soffit on the south-west corner of the property. It is further noted that the garden and adjacent structure may provide further suitable nesting opportunities for breeding birds |
| **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 and include pre-commencement inspections.<br><br>Nest boxes could be erected either on the dwelling or within the garden to provide enhancement. Guidance on suitable specifications is provided. |

# PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

| **Planning Authority:** | **Location:** | **Planning Application ref:** |
|---|---|---|
| Isles of Scilly | SV 91254 12245 | Report produced in support of application |

**Planning application address:**

Esperance, 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:

- Construction of an extension on the rear of the property which partially ties into the existing roof pitch.

**Building references:**

The building is 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 16th January 2026 in accordance with the methodology and guidance within the relevant Best Practice methodology[1].

**Local and Landscape Setting:**

The property is set at the southern end of a small linear development of detached dwellings at McFarland's Down. Each of the properties are set within their own mature gardens consisting of a mixture of lawn and flower borders which are bounded by hedgerows that contain the occasional mature tree.

Surrounding the residential development are a range of agricultural and semi-natural habitats including the local golf course - a large, exposed expanse of very short grassland and heathland – and mosaics of small, enclosed fields used both for grazing and for growing flowers. Coastal grassland, heathland and dune habitats associated with the shoreline of St Mary's are present to the north and west.

The desk study based on Isles of Scilly Bat Group records did not reveal any records of bats recorded roosting within the building historically.

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.

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

A common pipistrelle roost was recorded within McFarland's Down in 2014 in a garage approximately 60m to the east of the site, with further transient/day roosts recorded in 2025 associated with properties 350m to the south-east.

**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.*

*External Description*

The property is a single storey bungalow with a hipped projection to the main gable roof.

The external rendering is in good condition and timber door and window frames are well-fitted in their apertures.

Wooden soffits run along both the eaves and gables – these are tightly fitted and sealed and have guttering attached which would obstruct a direct fly-in access to any gaps between terminal tiles. The only gap noted is minor damage to the soffit on the south-western corner – the void behind this is filled with nesting material indicating use by birds but sufficiently dense to preclude recent access to suitable voids by roosting bats.

Gables are clad in timber – this is tightly fitted and sealed with no gaps noted. The roof verge is well-pointed throughout, with the exception of a minor missing section on the northern aspect which is physically separated from the proposed area of works and on a different aspect of the building.

The roof covering is concrete tiles – both roof and ridge tiles are well-fitted throughout with pointing intact, where present – no gaps were noted. Solar panels on the western aspect preclude comprehensive inspection of this aspect, but would also block any fly-in access to features beneath these panels which are surrounded by mesh preventing access for birds or bats beneath the panels.

The chimney is rendered – this is slightly cracked in places but these gaps are superficial only and do not open into sufficient cavities to represent roosting opportunities. The flashing which seals the junction between the chimney and the main roof is well-fitted with no gaps noted.

*Internal Description*

The loft space is used for routine storage and the floor is boarded out with relatively new insulation present above the boarding in much of the loft space. The roof is built around a typical timber truss framework.

There is thick felting between the rafters and the battens – this is generally in good condition however occasional tears occur.

The breeze block gable walls are well-pointed with no gaps noted. The timbers which abut the chimney breast create a minor cavity in places, but these were densely cobwebbed.

Rat and mouse droppings were noted – however no evidence of bats was identified.

*Summary*

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

- Damage to the soffit on the south-western corner, though the dense nesting material present would preclude recent use by roosting bats to access roosting features;
- A minor gap in the roof verge on the northern aspect – this location would not be directly or indirectly impacted by the proposed extension works and is not therefore given further consideration in this report.

**Survey Limitations**

Some aspects of the property could not be inspected closely at height, however inspection from a distance using binoculars was considered sufficient to have confidence in the assessment.

There are locations within the building where evidence of bats, if present, would not have been apparent from a PRA survey, such as between the underfelting and the tiles. However the lack of suitable access features identified in the external structure would minimise the significance of this constraint.

The solar panels would preclude comprehensive inspection of the condition of the tiles beneath these features; however mesh attached all around the panels between the units and the roof would preclude use of features beneath the panels by nesting birds or bats.

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:

- The gap in the south-western corner of the soffit and any voids which might be accessible from that location.

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 the northern 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**

A nest was confirmed in the damaged soffit in the south-western corner of the property. Additional minor opportunities may be found elsewhere on the structure, or within the associated garden.

In accordance with the precautionary principle, the building should be considered to provide **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.

Early or late nesting attempts by species such as collared dove may occur during the winter period and vigilance must be maintained by contractors irrespective of seasonal timing. The offence defined in the legislation is absolute; active nests cannot be damaged or destroyed at any time of year.

*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 – specifically in the gaps in the soffit on the south-western corner. 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 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.

**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 January 2027, 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**:

Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)**,** all bat species and their **breeding sites and resting places** are protected. It is an offence to:

- **Deliberately** capture, injure or kill a bat; and
- **Damage or destroy** a bat **breeding site or resting place** (often referred to as a "roost"). A roost can be protected **whether or not bats are present at the time**.

It is also an offence to **deliberately disturb** bats where the disturbance is likely to:

- impair their ability to **survive, breed/reproduce, or rear/nurture young**;
- impair their ability to **hibernate or migrate** (where relevant); or
- **significantly affect** the local distribution or abundance of the species.

Further protection is provided by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended, including by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000)**.** In summary, it is an offence to:

- **Intentionally or recklessly** damage, destroy or **obstruct access to** any structure or place used by bats for **shelter or protection**; and
- **Intentionally or recklessly** disturb a bat **while it is occupying** a structure or place used for shelter or protection.

If works cannot avoid risk of disturbing bats or damaging a roost, the activity may require a **licence from Natural England.**

Contractors should be aware of **where bats are most likely to be found in respect to the existing buildings** and an **appropriate methodology for works in those locations:**

**Boxed Soffit**

There is a section of damage to the soffit on the south-western corner of the property. Care must be taken to ensure that no active nests are present within this feature when the works are undertaken – see main report for guidance relating to nesting birds.

Whilst the use by nesting birds and significant obstruction caused by nesting materials would preclude recent access by bats, a change in condition or maintenance work to remove the old materials could result in the feature becoming suitable for use by roosting bats.

The void should be exposed carefully and by hand following removal of the soffit using hand tools. Any accessible voids or spaces including gaps beneath tiles, the wall plate and structural elements associated with the soffit framework should be carefully inspected prior to works proceeding. Further dismantling of features by hand may be necessary depending on the features identified as the works progress.

Once it can be conclusively confirmed that no bats are present, works can proceed.

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 that cannot be controlled or avoided by any other means**, 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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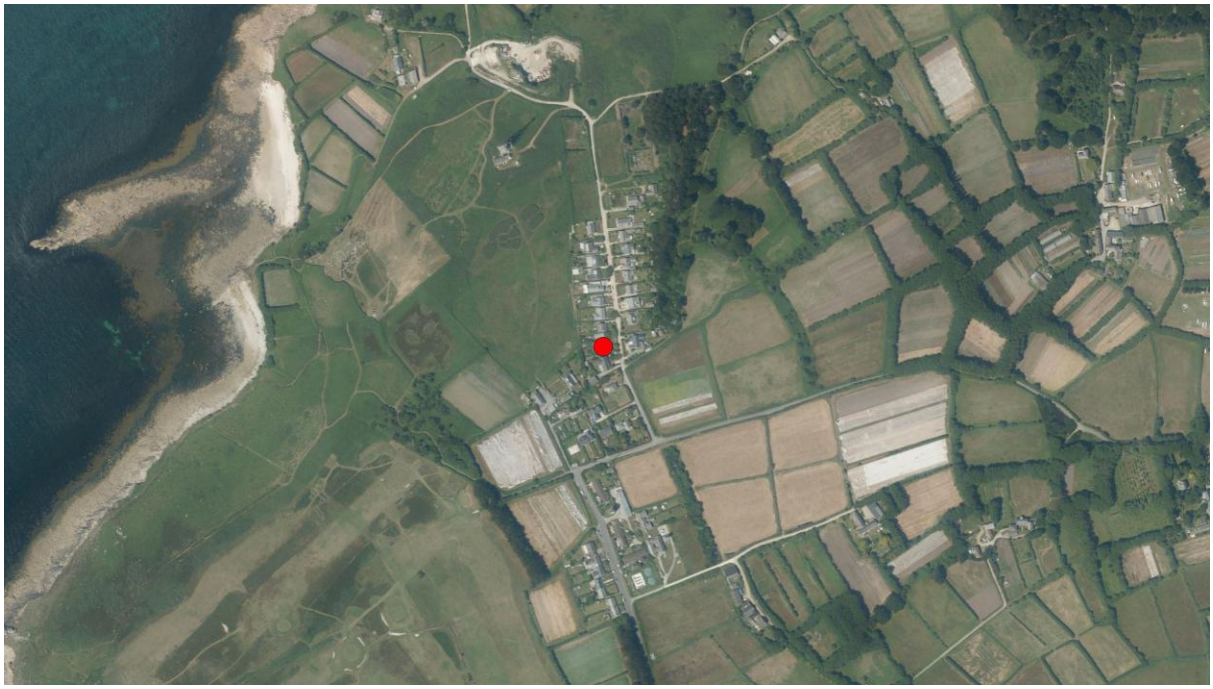
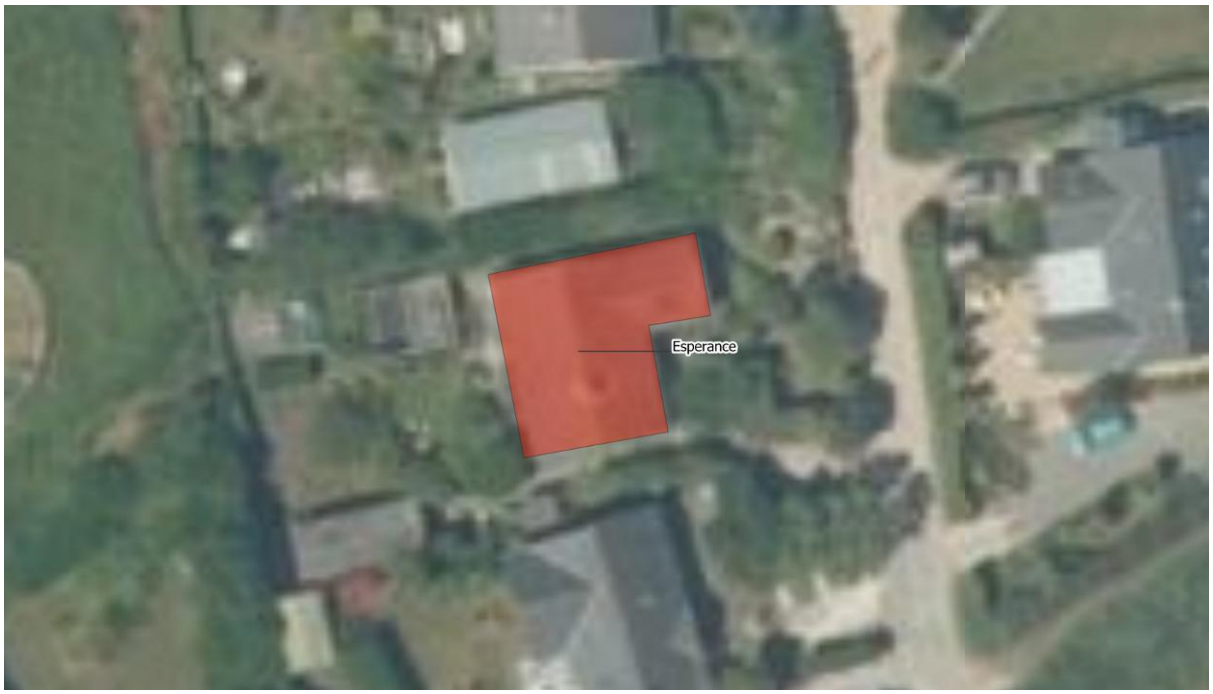
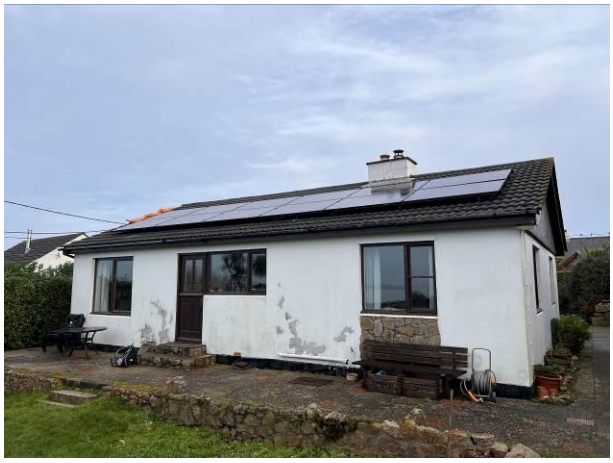
# LOCATION PLAN AND PHOTOGRAPHS



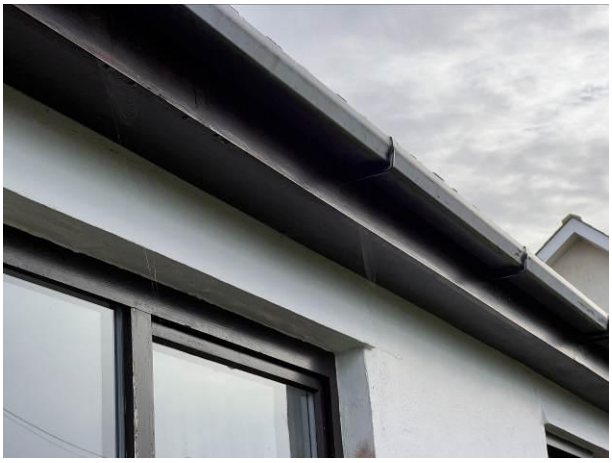
**Map 01** – Illustrating location of property within the local environs (red circle). Reproduced in accordance with Google's Fair Use Policy.



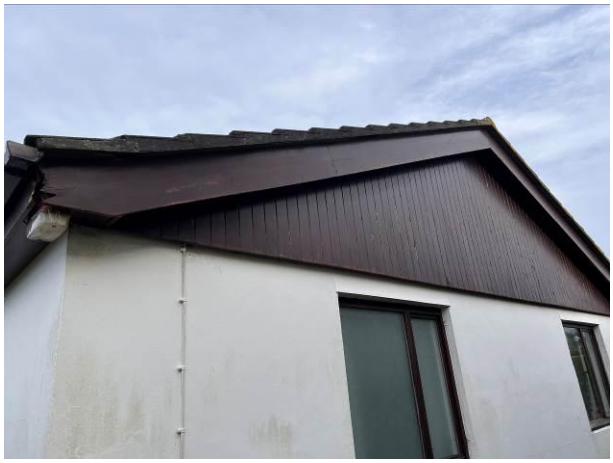

**Map 02** – Showing the property indicated by the red wash.



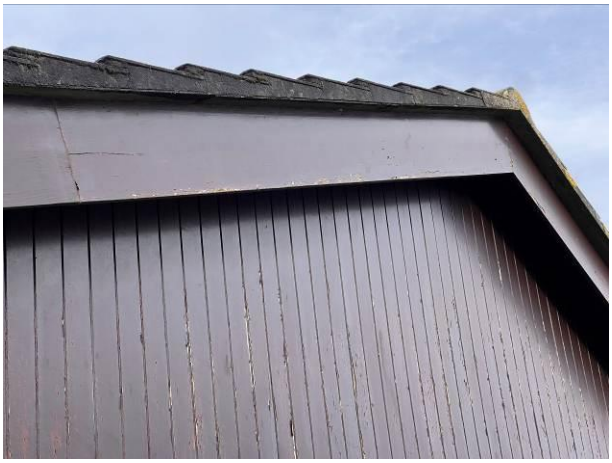
**Photograph 1:** Showing the rear aspect of the property.



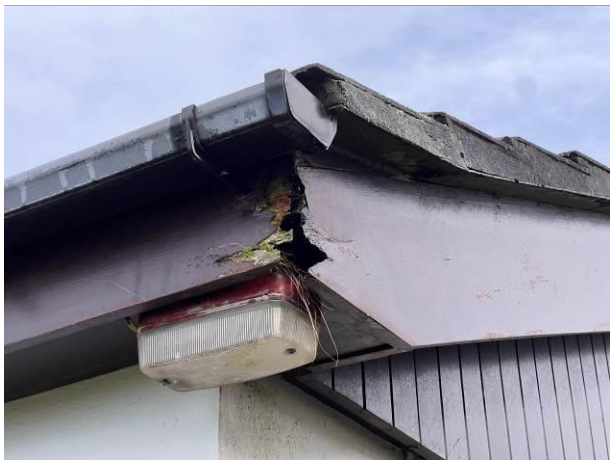
**Photograph 2:** Showing the well-sealed soffits of the property on the rear aspect.



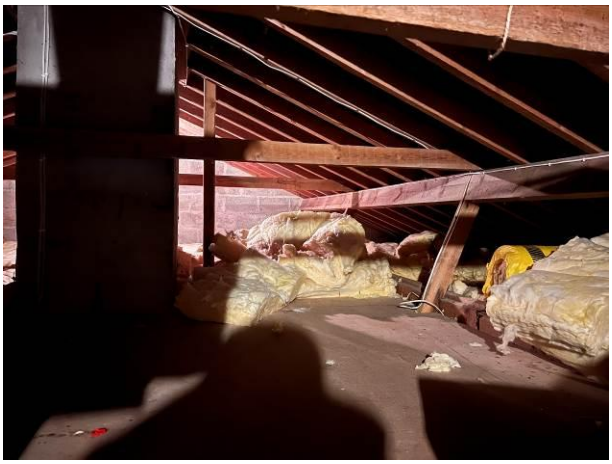
**Photograph 3:** Showing the gable end of the property with the soffit and vertical timber cladding.



**Photograph 4:** Showing a closer view of the timber cladding and well-sealed soffit as well as the well-pointed verge on the gable.



**Photograph 5:** Showing the gap in the soffit on the south-west corner of the property.



**Photograph 6:** Showing the interior of the loft space of the property.