

7, BRIARS RYN
PILLATON
SALTASH
PL12 6RA

ECOLOGICAL
ASSESSMENT

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QUALITY ASSURANCE

This survey work and report has been undertaken with reference to; The publication 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists' Collins, J. (ed) 2016, 3rd edition, Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Description	Ecological Assessment
Produced for	Mr & Mrs Dolley
Issue	1
Report Reference	7, Briars Ryn, Pillaton
Date of Survey Work	7 August 2023
Date of report	21 August 2023
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Checked & reviewed by	C Carter BSc (Hons) MCIEEM Principal Ecologist
Report validity period	12 months from date of survey

DISCLAIMER

This report provides a broad overview of the legal protection of wildlife and specifically relates to how the law is applied in England. The law applied to other countries of the United Kingdom may differ. This report does not offer formal legal advice and no liability is accepted. If legal advice is required related to wildlife issues, this should be sought from appropriate professionals.

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BRIEF SUMMARY

Brookside Ecology was commissioned by Mr & Mrs Dolley to undertake an Ecological Assessment of 7, Briars Ryn, Pillaton, Saltash, Cornwall, PL12 6RA. The assessment was undertaken to inform development proposals for the extension of the building in relation to the potential presence of protected species in accordance with local and national planning policy and legislative requirements.

The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was consulted. The site is within an 'impact risk zone' of statutory sites. This proposal does not require the planning authority to consult Natural England on potential risks to such sites.

The area is assessed as having 'high suitability for bat commuting and foraging habitat' which would increase the probability of bat roosts being in the area. The building was assessed as having high suitability for roosting bats. There were gaps under roof tiles and lead work that might allow potential bat access internally, either into the attic void below or to small voids between tiles and the inner lining which might be used by crevice roosting bats. Bat droppings found inside the attic, although not fresh, were still intact and in good condition but these were thought likely to be in excess of 12 months old. The number and distribution of the droppings were not considered necessarily indicative of this being a significant or an active roost site.

However, as development proposals will impact on the rooves and eaves of the building, these have risk of impacting potential bat roost features and bats if they are present at the time of development works. Accordingly, the assessment is guided by survey practice to make recommendation for some further survey work to be undertaken to determine presence or absence of bat roosts. If active roosts are found to be present, the survey work would seek to identify the species and character of the roosts as well as entry and exit points in order to inform an appropriate mitigation strategy and a European Protected Species Licence to Natural England where necessary.

No other protected or notable species and habitats issues were identified.

Further Survey

It is recommended three bat emergence surveys are undertaken between May and August/September, in accordance with survey practice.

INTRODUCTION

1. Brookside Ecology was commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Assessment of 7, Briars Ryn at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference (OSGR) SX 3648 6432 The assessment was undertaken to inform proposals in relation to the potential presence of protected species for legislative and planning requirements

PROPOSALS

2. It is proposed the dwelling is extended to provide further living accommodation.

OBJECTIVES

3. The purpose of this preliminary assessment is to:
 - Identify any ecological, bat or other protected or notable species issues that may impact the proposals.
 - Make preliminary recommendations for mitigation and enhancement opportunities where required.
 - Specify further survey work if required in accordance with best practice guidance.

METHODS

4. The preliminary assessment of the building was undertaken 7 August 2023 by C Carter and M Pearmain, Natural England registered bat workers.
5. A visual inspection of the interior and exterior of a building is undertaken for evidence of bat use following standard survey methodologies. The publication 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists'¹ is used for reference and guidance.
6. Several factors are taken into consideration during an assessment. These include; features present within or on the site that would support roosting bats; the potential for disturbance; lighting impacts; proximity of features to foraging habitat; connectivity to the site between it and the wider countryside.
7. A thorough examination of the exterior of a building is undertaken to search for evidence of bat use with a visual inspection of structures such as window and door lintels, gaps in walls, lead flashing, fascia boards, ridge, roof and hanging tiles where present. Underneath these features a search for evidence of droppings, staining from urine and fur oil that might indicate use by bats.
8. The internal search of a building follows a similar approach with a thorough search made of crevices in timber joints, wall sockets and gaps in walls where present. Evidence of bat droppings, urine stains plus prey residues such as fly, butterfly or moth wings and any live bats or bat carcasses that might be present.
9. Equipment available for use include close-focussing binoculars - Vistron 10 x 40, Endoscope - Scopecam, 3.8 metre extendable ladders and Clulite high powered torches.
10. The bat roosting potential of a building is assessed along with the surrounding habitat/commuting features and classified into one of the following categories:

¹ Collins, J. (ed) 2016, Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. 3rd edition, Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Suitability	Description of Roost Level
Negligible	Negligible feature/s likely to be used by roosting bats
Low	Structures with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation).
Moderate	Structures with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
High	Structures with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger number of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.
Roost	Known or Confirmed Roost

Table 1. Bat roosting potential of buildings/structures, adapted from Collins 2016 (Description of commuting/habitat aspects removed for simplicity)

OTHER NOTABLE SPECIES AND ECOLOGICAL ISSUES

11. Full consideration is given to how the development might impact other species and habitats on, and immediately surrounding the development.
12. In a development such as this the most likely wildlife that might be encountered would be nesting birds and hence a search is made for nests and faecal deposits.

DESK STUDY

13. The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was consulted to identify sites designated for their conservation or biological interest. The Natural England website was used to obtain citation details of statutory sites. A search was also undertaken for European Protected Species Licences for bats within the same radius which provides an indication of how developments are impacting on species and roosts in the area.

14. A 1 km search on NBN Atlas was undertaken to search for records of bats to ascertain their prevalence in the wider area.
15. Google satellite view was used to identify habitats of value to protected and notable species including woodland, tree lines and hedgerows, scrub, areas of grassland and waterbodies.

LIMITATIONS

16. None.

RESULTS

WEATHER

17. Clear, Dry, 70% Cloud Cover, Temp 18°C, Wind speed Beaufort 1

SITE CONTEXT

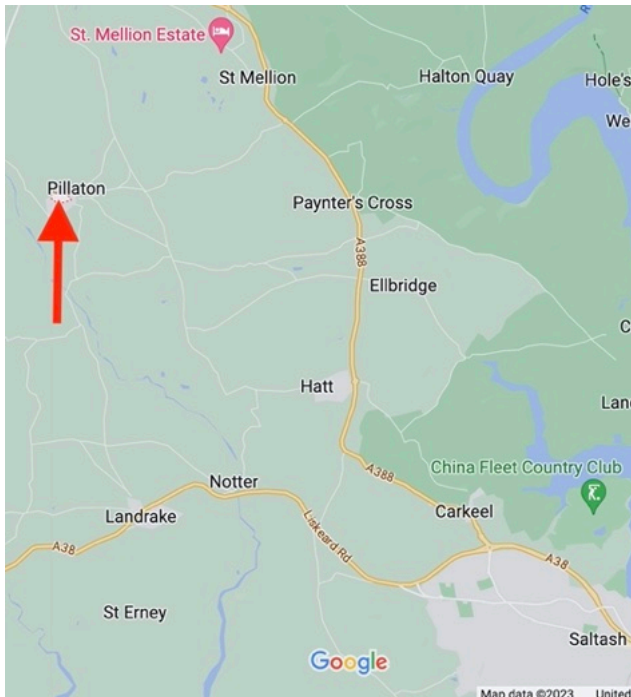


Figure 1. Red arrow indicates site location

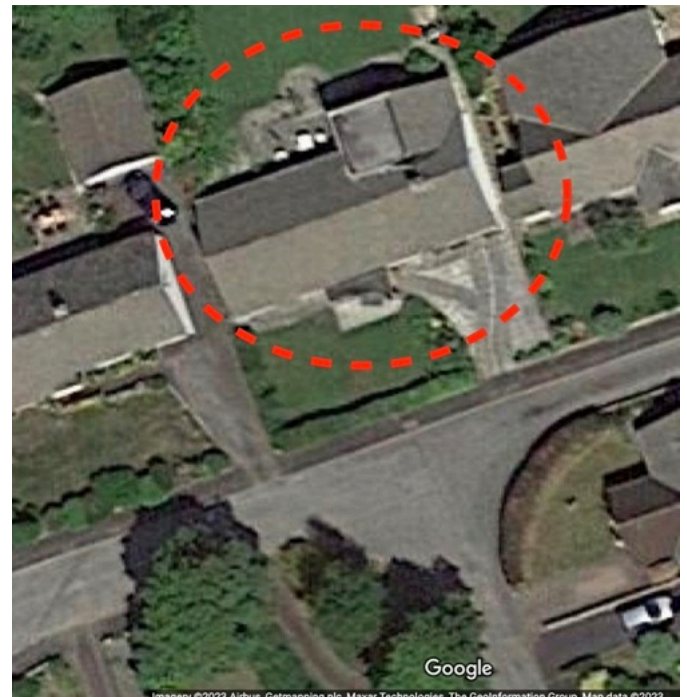


Plate 1. Google Satellite view, red area indicates buildings surveyed

18. The site is situated in the village of Pillaton near Saltash in Cornwall. It is surrounded by established residential development with hedge bordered fields of grassland less than 50m to the north-west. In the wider landscape are fields of arable, pockets of woodland and plantation and watercourses. Close by hedges and tree lines provide natural connective features that might assist wildlife such as bats to commute between site and wider countryside. There would be moderate levels of light pollution in the area of the building from light spill from adjacent dwellings.



Plate 2. Front southern elevation

BUILDING

19. The building (Plate 2) is a detached, stone and concrete block bungalow under an interlocking cement tiled roof. To the rear, northern elevation (Plate 3) is a double storey extension under flat and mono pitched rooves.
20. Externally, the walls were well rendered/pointed with tight fitting uPVC fascia and gable end boards. The roof tiles were mainly tight fitting but some small gaps were noted under chimney flashing, occasional lifted roof tiles and around a soil pipe (Plates 4, 5) potentially large enough for bats to access.
21. Internally (Plate 6) the attic was insulated to the floor with mineral wool and the underside of the roof tiles lined with a combination of breathable membrane, bitumastic felt, mineral wool and paper which was torn in places (Plate 7). A search of the attic found two areas of bat droppings (Plates 8 ,9) with approximately 12 droppings to each location (locations shown in Plate 10). One beneath a torn section of roof liner to the centre section of the attic, the other adjacent to the western gable end. The droppings were not considered to be fresh but thought to be +/- 12 months old but all were of a similar age and characteristic of possible

Plecotus species of bat. A further dozen droppings were noted widely scattered across the attic.

SURROUNDS

22. The area around the building is mainly of garden lawns and shrub borders with tarmac drive and parking and to the area of the proposed extension, concrete slab patio.



Plate 3. Northern elevation,



Plate 4. Gaps to tiles close to extension

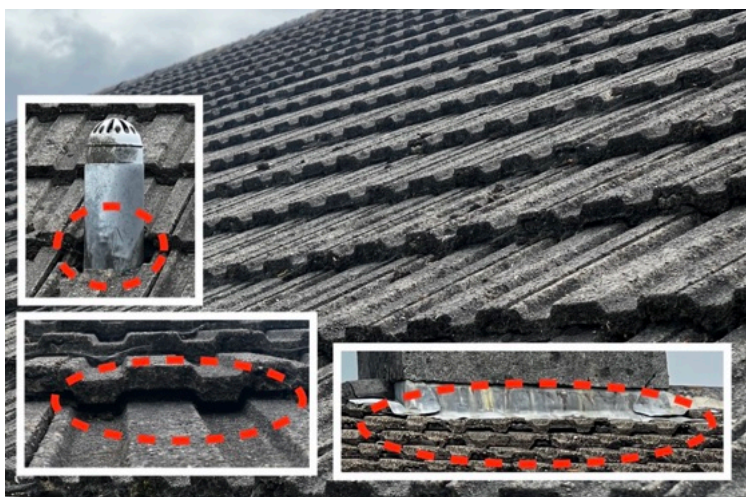


Plate 5. Main roof generally tight fitting tiles with occasional gaps large enough for bats



Plate 6. Internal view of attic



Plate 7. Multiple liners beneath roof tiles

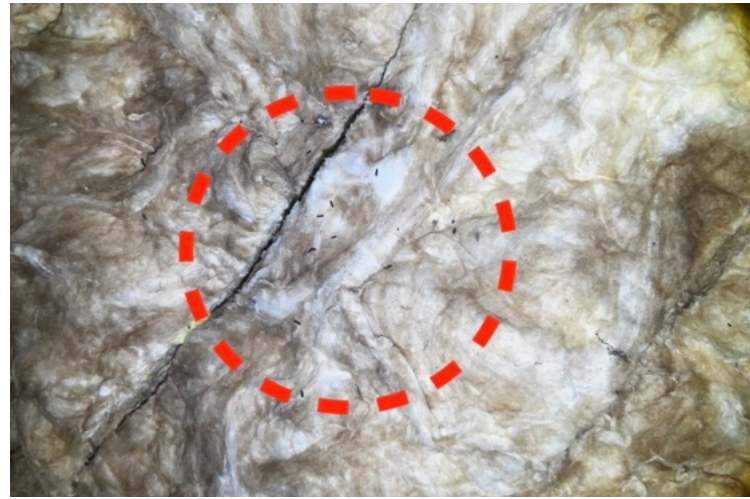


Plate 8. Bat droppings beneath torn section of roof liner



Plate 9. Bat droppings adjacent to western gable end



Plate 10. Location of areas of localised bat droppings

DESK STUDY

23. The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (Magic) website was consulted and revealed the site is within an 'impact risk zone' of statutory sites. This proposal does not appear to require the planning authority to consult Natural England and the potential risks to such sites.
24. No statutory sites were found within the search radius.
25. The search for records of European Protected Species Licences granted for bats found no licence applications.
26. A search on NBN Atlas revealed multiple bat records to the outer edge of the search radius of Barbastelle, Natterer's, Common and Soprano Pipistrelle and Greater and Lesser Horseshoe species of bat.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

27. The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was consulted. The site is within an 'impact risk zone' of statutory sites. This proposal does not require the planning authority to consult Natural England on potential risks to such sites. The searches did not reveal further items considered pertinent to the proposed development or site.
28. The area is assessed as having 'high suitability for bat commuting and foraging habitat.' The building is in an area that provides good habitat for wildlife with adjacent natural connective features that might assist wildlife such as bats to commute between site and wider countryside. These factors would increase the probability of bat roosts being in the area.
29. The dwelling was assessed as having high suitability for roosting bats. There were gaps under roof tiles and lead work that might allow potential bat access internally, either into the attic void below or to small voids between tiles and the inner lining which might be used by crevice roosting bats. Bat droppings found inside the attic, although not fresh, were still intact and in good condition without significant decay. However, bat droppings within attic spaces can remain very well preserved in suitable conditions so it is difficult to confirm age but these were thought likely to be in excess of 12 months old with potential to be much older. The droppings were considered characteristic of *Plecotus* species of bat. The number and distribution of the droppings are not considered strongly indicative of this being a significant or an active roost site for a large number of bats or that the attic has been used over an extended period of years. It may have only formed an occasional roost site for one or two bats over a very short period.
30. However, in consideration of development proposals that will require impact on the rooves and eaves of the building, these have risk of impacting potential bat roost features and bats if they are present at the time of development works. Accordingly, survey practice guides us to make recommendation for some further survey work to be undertaken to determine presence or absence of bat roosts. If active roosts are found to be present, the survey work would seek to identify the species and character of the roosts as well as entry and exit points in order to inform an appropriate mitigation strategy and a European Protected Species Licence to Natural England where necessary.

31. No other protected or notable species and habitats issues were identified.

FURTHER SURVEY

32. It is recommended three bat emergence surveys are undertaken between May and August/September, in accordance with survey practice.

LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY

33. A brief outline of relevant wildlife legislation is detailed below with a focus on that relevant to the site in question. It is not meant to be an in depth treatise of all wildlife regulations as this is not possible within the scope of this report. It is advised that individuals should seek professional legal advice if necessary.

BATS

34. All British bats are protected under both UK and EU law; The Habitats Directive, which is transposed into law in England and Wales by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('Habitats Regulations'), as amended.

35. Regulation 41 (1) of the Regulations makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill bat(s);
- Deliberately disturb bat(s) affecting their ability to survive, breed, rear young or significantly affect local distribution or abundance;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place, whether present or not;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat roost;
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to roost sites;
- Possess, control, transport, sell, exchange or offer for sale or exchange, live or dead bats, or parts thereof.

36. Some rare bat species, namely Greater Horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, Lesser Horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, Barbastelle *Barbastellus barbastellus* and Bechstein's *Myotis bechsteinii*, are afforded greater protection under European legislation, being listed under Annex II of the EC Habitats Directive which lists species whose conservation requires the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).

BIRDS

37. All wild birds are protected under the Habitats Regulations. Under this legislation it is an offence to:

- Kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built; and
- Take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

38. The relevant adopted policy at the national level is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as amended July 2021, which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. This emphasises the need for planning authorities to consider biological conservation and the need for maintaining and enhancing biodiversity within planning policies and decisions.