Preliminary Ecological Appraisal: 21 The Avenue, Ickenham

Client	Juttla Architects
Reference	J1149.002
Issue	One
Date	31 May 2024

Written by Deqa Mohamed

Crossman Associates
Ecological Consultants
Fire Engine House
Oakhill, Bath BA3 5BJ
01761 233414
info@crossmanassociates.co.uk

www.crossmanassociates.co.uk

crossman ASSOCIATES

NATURAL SOLUTIONS

Non-technical Summary

Background

In May 2024, Crossman Associates was commissioned to undertake an ecological appraisal and a bat scoping survey of 21 The Avenue, Ickenham, Uxbridge, UB10 8NR. Development proposals include erection of single storey extension to the front and double storey extensions to the side and rear of the dwelling. Conversion of roof space to habitable use to include the increase of the ridge height, two front dormers, two rear dormers and amendments to fenestration.

Methodology

The survey was undertaken by Deqa Mohamed, an experienced ecologist and bat worker. The building was inspected externally and internally for any evidence of bat or bird presence, such as droppings, food remains, staining or the presence of bats or birds. Adjacent habitats were checked for suitability for other protected species.

Results

The site is located in a residential area within Uxbridge, Greater London. The front and rear gardens are well-maintained and dominated by managed amenity grassland, although areas of introduced shrubs and scrub are present. Several scattered trees are present across the site, with the largest being located at the rear end of the site (south-east) and are likely to provide foraging and nesting opportunities for common garden and farm birds.

The dwelling remains in good condition and provides no significant features suitable for roosting bats or nesting birds.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the following is undertaken as part of the proposals

- Precautionary approach to be taken in relation to bats and hedgehogs.
- Sensitive clearance of vegetation with regard to birds.
- Install bird boxes on the exterior of the new development.
- Reduced external lighting to benefit nocturnal wildlife.

Contents

1. Background

1.1. In May 2024, Crossman Associates was commissioned to undertake an ecological appraisal and a bat scoping survey of 21 The Avenue, Ickenham, Uxbridge, UB10 8NR. Site Ordnance Survey grid reference TQ 07551 86149.

1.2. Figure 1 in Appendix I provides a site location map.

1.3. Development proposals include for the erection of single storey extension to the front and double storey extensions to the side and rear of the dwelling. Conversion of roof space to habitable use to include the increase of the ridge height, two front dormers, two rear dormers and amendments to fenestration.

1.4. The objectives of the survey were to:

- Map the existing habitats on site
- Provide an assessment of the likely presence/absence of notable or protected species
- Identify any legislative or planning policy constraints relevant to the site
- Determine the need for further surveys, compensation or mitigation

Site Description

1.5. 21 The Avenue is a two-storey detached house with a medium-sized, well-maintained garden that is composed of a patio (hardstanding), managed amenity lawn, scrub, scattered trees and areas of ornamental planting.

1.6. The property is in Uxbridge, Greater London. The site is surrounded by similar properties, with maintained gardens. The River Pinn is located approximately 160 m west of the property.

1.7. The wider landscape is largely urban although several urban green spaces such as Swakeleys Park and Uxbridge Golf Course are nearby. Woodland copses, waterbodies and grasslands are all frequent habitats in the wider area.

2. Methodology

Desktop Study

Data search

2.1. The MAGIC website was accessed to gain information on any statutory site designations within 2 km of the site. This was extended to 4 km in respect of sites specifically designated for bat conservation.

National Planning Policy

2.2. National Planning Policy has been reviewed for policies that relate to nature conservation relevant to the site.

Field Survey

Bat scoping survey

2.3. The building was methodically inspected internally and externally for any evidence of roosting bats, including actual bats, droppings, urine staining and evidence of feeding activity such as discarded insect wings and cases.

2.4. The building was also assessed for its suitability to support roosting bats by considering several factors including whether bats can access internal and external voids within the building and whether these voids provide adequate protection and shelter for roosting bats. If the building is not confirmed as a roost, it is assessed from High to Negligible Suitability as follows;

- **High Suitability** – many roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be old, large and rural

- **Moderate Suitability** – some roosting opportunities. Building tend to be old, rural with some recent maintenance
- **Low Suitability** – few roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be modern, urban and well maintained
- **Negligible Suitability** – insignificant roosting opportunities. Buildings tend to be small, modern, urban and very well maintained.

Ecological appraisal

2.5. The ecological appraisal follows Phase 1 habitat survey methodology, which is a survey method and habitat classification system that was developed by the Nature Conservation Council, now Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC, 2003) to map habitats and land use categories to a 'consistent level and accuracy'. The habitats are mapped using standard colour codes allowing rapid visual assessment of the extent and distribution of different habitat types. Where appropriate, Target Notes highlight potential features of interest.

2.6. An extended Phase 1 habitat survey also records provisional signs of protected or notable species and assesses the suitability of the habitats on-site and within the accessible surroundings of the site to support such species.

Site Evaluation

2.7. The site evaluation for the habitat areas and species present (where appropriate) is based on published criteria given in the CIEEM guidelines for ecological impact assessment. Values are assigned between International Value and Negligible Value to habitats that are likely to be directly or indirectly affected by the proposed development.

2.8. The value categories used in the assessment are as follows:

- International – Europe

- National – England
- Regional – South-east
- Local – Uxbridge
- Site – Within the immediate zone of influence

2.9. The conservation and ecological status of the site is assessed using the Ratcliffe criteria (1977).

3. Results

Desktop Study

Data Search

3.1. The Magic website informed of the following statutory site designation within 2 km of the site;

- Fray's Farm Meadows (SSSI)
- Frays Valley (LNR)

3.2. The small-scale nature of the development is not considered to have a significant impact on the designated sites mentioned. Furthermore, the proposed development site is located approximately 1.6 km east of the statutory designated sites.

3.3. The MAGIC website informed that there are no statutory sites within 4 km of the site designated for bats.

Planning Policy

3.4. National policy guidance is provided by National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which sets out the Government' planning policies for England and how they should be applied to planning applications;

<u>Conserving and enhancing the natural environment</u>

- Planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

Habitats and Biodiversity

- When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful

impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;

b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and

d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

Field Survey

3.5. Survey work was undertaken by Deqa Mohamed an experienced ecologist and took place on 18th May 2024.

Habitat survey

3.6. The habitats on site are described in the paragraphs below and are shown in Figure 2, Appendix I. Photographs can be found in Appendix II.

- Amenity grassland
- Trees
- Introduced shrub
- Scrub
- Hedgerows
- Hard standing
- Buildings

Amenity grassland

3.7. The property has a medium size garden which is well-maintained. A small patch of amenity grassland is also present at the front (north-west) end of the property. The lawn remains short and is species-poor, thus does not have any significant ecological value.

Trees

3.8. There are several trees scattered across the rear garden of the site which are of varying sizes. Species include deodar cedar *Cedrus deodora*, apple *Malus*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and a group of Leyland cypress *Cupressus x leilandii*. The proposals will require the removal of non-native, ornamental shrubs a small cabbage tree *Cordyline australis* which are of low ecological value.

Ornamental

3.9. Areas of ornamental shrubs are found along the northern and southern boundaries within the rear garden. Species include kohuhu *Pittosporum tenuifolium,* Japanese pieris *Pieris japonica*, thorny olive *Elaeagnus pungens*, pacific rhododendron *Rhododendron macrophyllum* and tutsan *Hypericum androsaemum*.

Hedgerows

3.10. Two sections of hedgerows are bounding the survey site from the northern and southern directions within the front garden area. These hedgerows are short, maintained and compost of a hornbeam *Carpinus betulus*.

Hard standing

3.11. Hard standing areas forms an entrance/drive from The Avenue and surround the dwelling. These areas are composed with concrete.

Species observation

Flora

3.12. The garden provides an artificially created area, dominated a varied mixture of trees, shrubs and introduced plants, which is maintained.

Non – native invasive plants

3.13. The non-native invasive plant species rhododendron was recorded on site during the visit. This species should be managed from spreading into the "wild". It is possible that further invasive plants could be missed. It is therefore recommended that the site is monitored for the presence of such species.

Invertebrates

3.14. The site is likely to support a limited invertebrate community of species typical of domestic gardens.

Amphibians

3.15. The site has no ponds, and there are no known ponds within proximity of the site; however, there may be small ornamental ponds within neighbouring gardens. Such ponds may be suitable as a breeding location for common amphibians such as the

common frog *Rana temporaria,* however, these types of ponds are generally unsuitable for great crested newt *Triturus cristatus,* and the presence of this species on or within proximity of the site is considered unlikely.

Reptiles

3.16. The majority of the garden is composed of short amenity lawns which provide negligible reptile habitat.

3.17. The presence of any significant reptile population is considered unlikely.

Birds

3.18. Mature shrubs and trees provide opportunities for nesting birds and the garden is likely to offer both foraging and nesting opportunities for a range of common garden and farmland species. The seed and berry-bearing plants on-site provide a good foraging resource for birds.

Badgers

3.31. There are no badger *Meles meles* setts on-site and no evidence of badger activity was recorded on site.

European hedgehog

3.19. The site provides potential habitat for hedgehogs *Erinaceous europaeus* which may use the garden in conjunction with adjacent gardens as a foraging site.

Bat scoping survey

3.20. The external and internal conditions of the building are described in the table below and photographic reference can be found within Appendix II.

3.21. A table within Appendix III set out the criteria for the way a building is assessed for its potential to support roosting bats.

Table 1: Bat survey results (B1)

Building	Feature	Feature Description	Bat suitability
Main House (B1)	Overview	The dwelling consists of a two storey detached house. Overall, the house remains in good condition and is occupied. No droppings, staining, feeding remains or actual bats were observed in any aspect of the buildings.	Negligible Suitability ☒
	Exterior	The exterior is rendered and although it appears to be ageing in places, there were no suitable roosting features identified. Windows and doors all fit well within their respective reveals.	
	Interior	The interior consists of a rooms that provide well-sealed living areas. The roof void is well sealed with timber bargeboards and glass wool insultation. No daylight was seen to be entering the void and no gaps were observed.	
	Roof	The single chimney and flat-roofed dormer window are well sealed to the roof with lead flashing. Clay hanging tiles along the dormer window fit flush against one another, exhibiting no roosting features suitable for bats.	

Building	Feature	Feature Description	Bat suitability
		The roof tiles and ridge tiles are all present, barring one missing tile at the NW end of the built structure which is at a low height. The tiles are generally well sealed although tiles along the roof verges appear to be slightly lifted.	

Table 2: Bat survey results (B2)

Building	Feature	Feature Description	Bat suitability
Detached garage (B2)	Overview	The dwelling consists of a single storey detached garage which is in constant use for storage purposes. No droppings, staining, feeding remains or actual bats were observed in any aspect of the buildings.	Negligible Suitability ☒
	Exterior	The walls remain in good condition; no cracks or gaps were observed. Windows and doors all fit well. Dense vegetation covers the vast majority of the structures exterior, thus creating no clear access points for bats.	

Building	Feature	Feature Description	Bat suitability
	Interior	No roof void is present, and any bats attempting to roost within this structure would be subject to light disturbances due to the presence of windows.	
	Roof	The garage possesses a gabled roof structure consisting of corrugated fibre cement which is further covered by dense vegetation.	

Evaluation

3.22. The garden provides an artificially created and managed area containing mainly amenity grassland, scrub, scattered trees and ornamental species; it therefore lacks permanence, rarity, naturalness or fragility.

3.23. The site is typical of surrounding residential units and is considered to be of ecological value at a site level.

Bats

3.24. The site is in a residential area but lies near to grassland, woodlands and waterbodies, which is likely to function as commuting and foraging resource for bats.

3.25. During the scoping survey no droppings, staining, feeding remains or actual bats were observed in any aspect of the buildings. No evidence of bat activity was noted and there were no abiotic roosting opportunities.

4. Recommendations

4.1. The recommendations in the paragraphs below are provided to help ensure that wildlife and important ecological features are protected during the course of works. Recommendations also set out mitigation measures to minimise harm where this cannot be avoided and provide compensation measures to allow the proposals to meet current legislative and planning policy objectives.

4.2. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) states that a public authority must 'in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity; Conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat'.

4.3. Under the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.

Species Recommendations

Bats

4.4. All bats within the UK are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act as Amended and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations. Under this registration there are strict liability offence to injure or destroy a bat or to disturb, damage or destroy the resting place (roost) of a bat. Under the Bonn Convention, the UK is obliged through the planning system to protect important bat habitats.

4.5. Due to the transitory nature of bats, there remains a small possibility that bats could be encountered during renovation works; therefore, all works will proceed under a precautionary approach. Tiles and roof panels will be removed in a vertical

rather than horizontal sliding motion. Roof timbers, leadwork, roofing felt, soffits and masonry will be dismantled using a 'soft' approach taking care with cavity walls where present. All site workers will be vigilant at all times and in the very unlikely event that a bat is found, then works must stop immediately and advice should be sought from Crossman Associates or Natural England.

Lighting

4.6. The site lies near to grasslands and woodlands and these habitats are likely to support a number of species of bat; typical species that would be likely to be present include common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle, therefore any exterior lighting that is to be employed should be of the modern LED-type and should take into account the presence of bats and avoid over illumination of the garden, trees and adjacent properties. This can be achieved by using directional lights and or cowls.

Birds

4.7. All nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended), which makes it an offence to damage or destroy a nest when being built or in use. This legislation has implications for the timing of vegetation clearance and renovation works.

Any clearance works should take place outside of the nesting bird season, which runs from March to September; any works to be carried out within this period will be overseen by an ecologist or an ecological clerk of works (ECoW). Prior to the commencement of works, a thorough check will be made for nesting birds or dependant young. If birds are found to be nesting and or rearing young then works in the vicinity will be deferred until young have fledged and left the nest.

Hedgehog

4.8. In the UK hedgehogs are listed on schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as Amended which makes it illegal to kill or capture wild hedgehogs.

Hedgehogs are also listed as a species of 'principal importance' under the Natural Environmental and Rural Communities Act 2006, which is meant to confer a 'duty of responsibility' to public bodies.

4.9. Excavated holes and trenches on building sites have the potential to trap wildlife including hedgehogs leading to the potential suffering and death of the animal (s) particularly if they become filled with water.

4.10. If during the development excavated holes / trenches are likely to be left open, then timber builders' planks should be fitted as ramps to enable any wildlife including hedgehogs a means of escape.

4.11. In the case of solid fences being installed, small holes measuring approximately 150 mm x 150 mm should be created at the bases to allow the passage of hedgehogs and other wildlife.

Biodiversity enhancement

Birds

4.12. During the construction phase, there is an opportunity to incorporate inexpensive ecological enhancements that aim to increase the biodiversity of the site.

4.13. New nesting opportunities will be provided for the local bird population with a particular emphasis on house sparrows (which have suffered significant decline) and it is recommended that a sparrow nest box is installed within the development.

4.14. Sparrow nest boxes are ideally fitted below eaves. Suitable models include the Vivara Woodstone Sparrow Nest Box, which is suitable for integral and surface mounting. This model is strong, durable, long lasting and available in brown or stone colour. It is recommended that one box is installed on southern elevation (Figure 3).

4.15. Bird boxes are available from www.wildlifeservices.co.uk, telephone number 0333 9000 92. Further models are supplied by Habibat www.habibat.co.uk , telephone number 01642 724626.

5. Limitations

5.1. This report records wildlife found during the survey and anecdotal evidence of sightings. It does not record any plants or animals that may appear at other times of the year and were therefore not evident at the time of visit.

5.2. This report represents a preliminary assessment only. Recommendations and conclusions are subject to change should further findings significantly differ from those collected from the survey efforts to date.

5.3. The advice contained in this report relate primarily to factual survey results and general guidance only. On all legal matters you are advised to take legal advice.

6. References

Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) *Bats and Lighting in the UK* BCT

HMSO (1981) *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and subsequent amendments).* HMSO

HMSO (1995) *Biodiversity.* The UK Steering Group Report

Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) *Common Standards Monitoring Guidance for Reptiles and Amphibians* (2004) JNCC

Mitchell-Jones, A.J (2004) *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* English Nature

Mitchell-Jones, A.J, & McLeish A.P. (2012) *The Bat Worker's Manual* (4th Edition)

Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) Website at www.magic.gov.uk

Stace, C. (1997) *New Flora of the British Isles 2nd Edition.* Cambridge University Press

TSO (2018) *National Planning Policy Framework.* TSO

TSO (2021) *National Planning Policy Framework.* TSO

TSO (2006) *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act* TSO

Appendix I – Site Figures

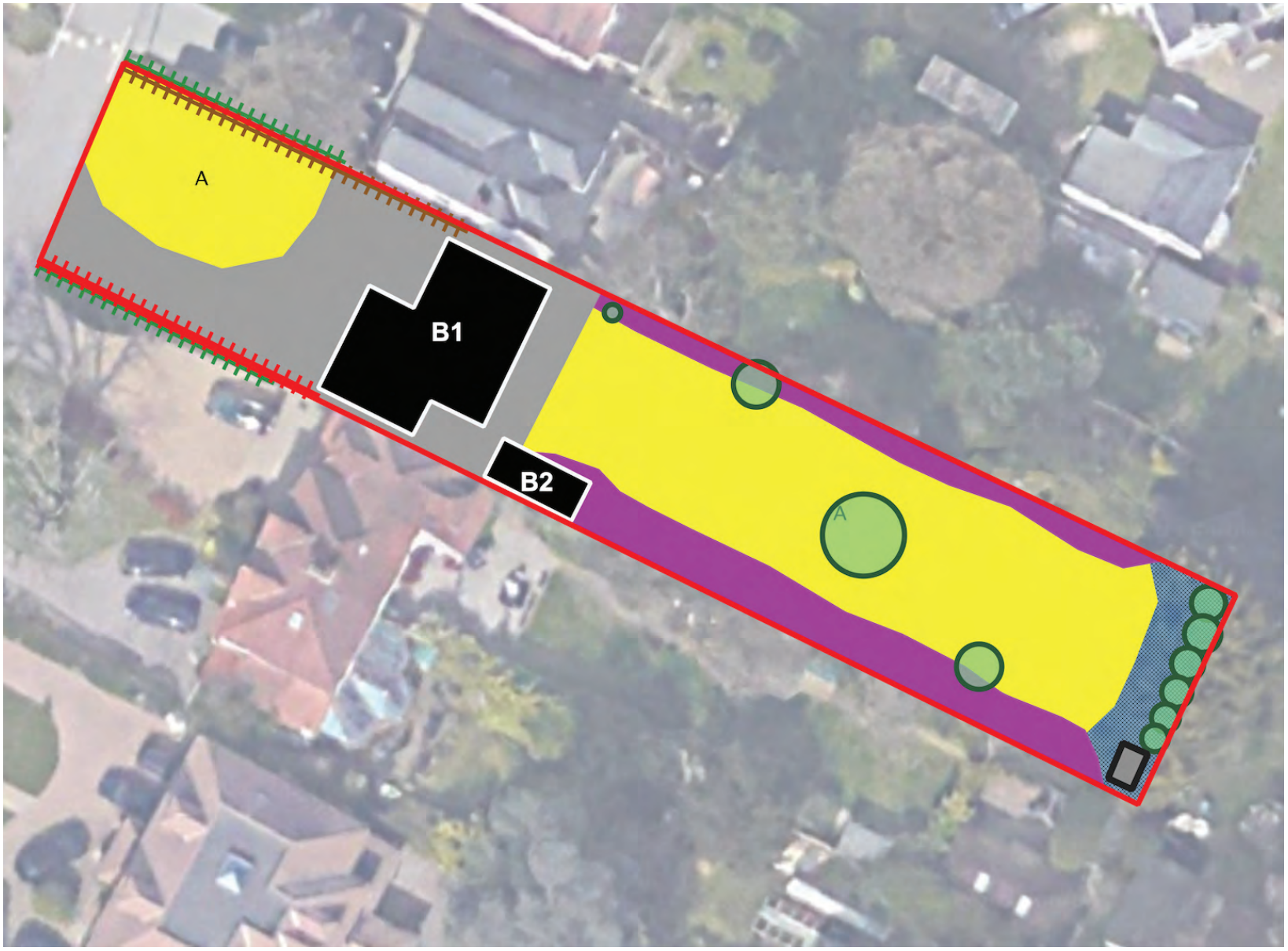
crossman
ASSOCIATES

01761 233414
info@crossmanassociates.co.uk
www.crossmanassociates.co.uk

N

● Site location

Client	Juttla Architects
Title	Location plan
Site	21 The Avenue
Figure	1
Date	31 May 2024
Scale	xxx



crossman
ASSOCIATES

N

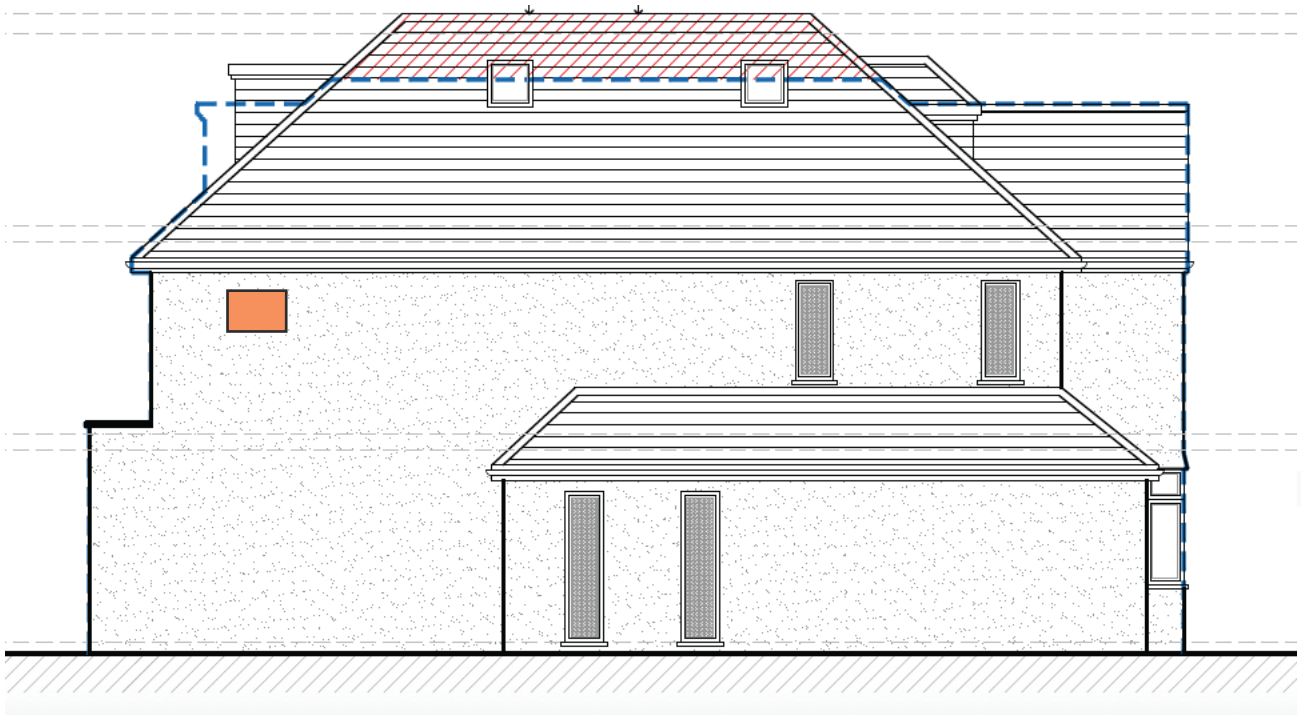
01761 233414
info@crossmanassociates.co.uk
www.crossmanassociates.co.uk

- Boundary
- Wall
- Fence
- Hedgerow
- Buildings
- Shed
- Hard standing
- Introduced Shrub
- A Amenity grassland
- Scrub
- Trees

Client	Juttla Architects
Title	Habitats map
Site	21 The Avenue
Figure	2
Date	31 May 2024
Scale	xxx

crossman
ASSOCIATES

01761 233414
info@crossmanassociates.co.uk
www.crossmanassociates.co.uk



Side (southern elevation)

Sparrow nest box

Client	Juttla Architects
Title	Enhancement plan
Site	21 The Avenue, Ichenham
Figure	3
Date	6 June 2024
Scale	Indicative

Appendix II – Site Photographs

Photographs 1- 3

Photograph 1:

Front - western elevation

Photograph 2:

Northwestern elevation

Photograph 3:

Back - eastern elevation

Photographs 4 - 6

Photograph 4:

Roof void

Photograph 5:

Garden

Photograph 6:

Garage

Appendix III– Information Sheets

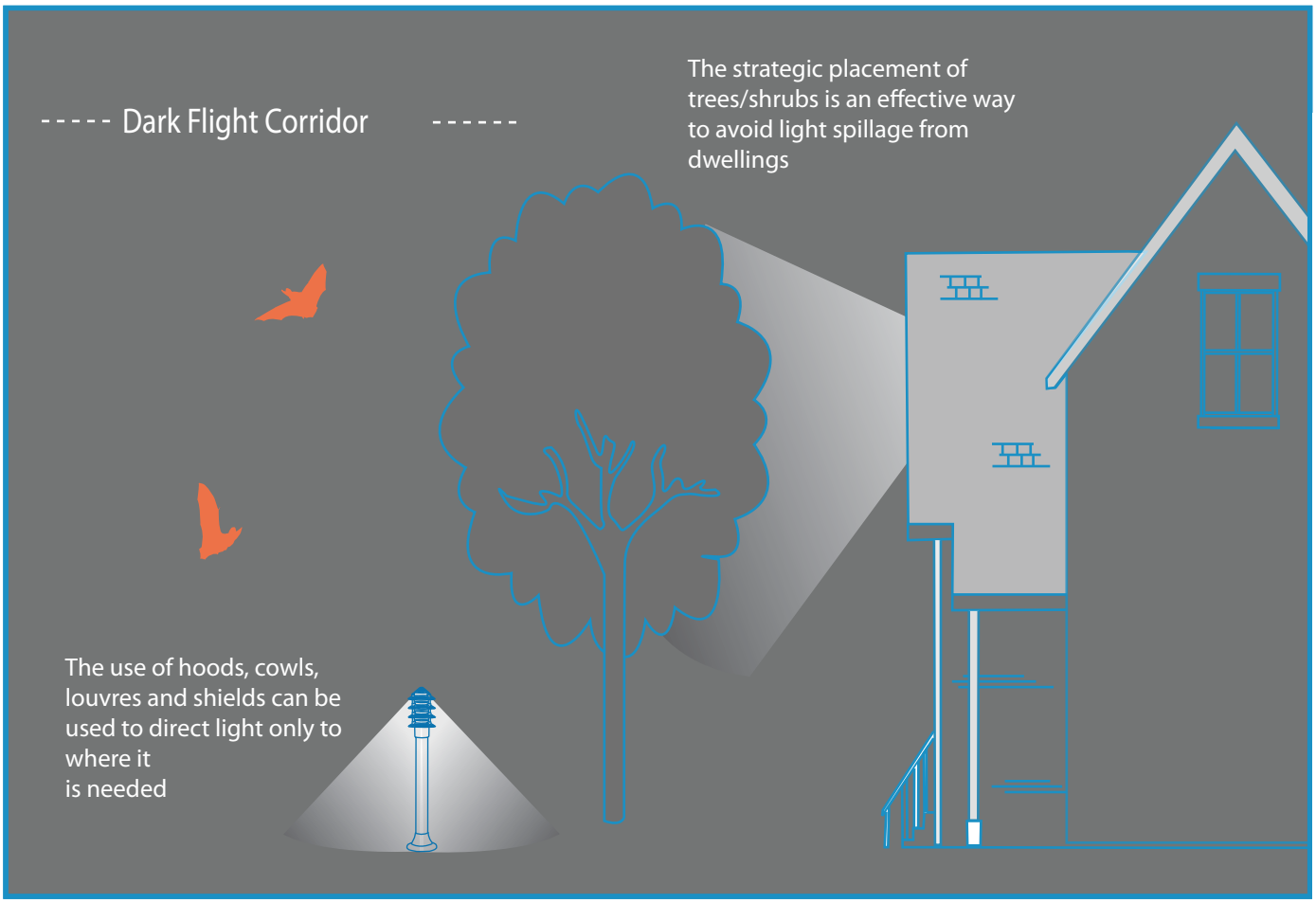
Bat Habitat Suitably Criteria

Bat Roosting Suitability	Criteria	Survey requirement to prove likely absence
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.	No further survey work required
Low	A building, structure or tree with one or more potential roosting sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically; however, these possible roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used by large numbers of bats and are unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation roosts.	One activity survey
Medium	A building, structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to the size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habit, but is unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.	Two activity surveys
High	A building, structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.	Three activity surveys

Survey requirements are taken from Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (2016), which is the recognised industry standard guidance used by local planning authorities and other statutory consultees.

Sensitive Lighting for Bats

MITIGATION GUIDELINE N° 001



Lamp Type

The impact of light on bats can be minimised by the use of low/high pressure sodium lamps.

Lighting Column

The height of lighting columns should be kept as low as possible to reduce the impact of light spill. For example, when designing lighting for pedestrian walkways, use short bollard lights that produce a low level light (as low as 3 lux) directed downwards.

Light Mapping

Mapping the light spill of a lighting scheme using computer software can prove essential in designing schemes that are fit for purpose, that minimise energy costs and create dark flight corridors and foraging areas for bats.

Light Levels

Proposed light levels within landscape plans should be as low as possible. If lighting is not needed, don't light.

Timing of Lighting

The times at when lighting is left on should be limited where possible. The use of movement sensors and timers for lights is useful for saving energy and reducing the amount of time a light is left on.

Impacts of Light on Bats

As nocturnal mammals, light causes disturbance to bats and many species will actively avoid lit areas. The illumination of bat roosts can delay bats emerging and thus shorten their foraging time and may eventually lead to bats abandoning their roost. The illumination of foraging or commuting areas may also lead to an increase in the rate of predation of bats by predators.

crossman ASSOCIATES

Written by James Tristram

01761 233414

hello@crossmanassociates.co.uk

Fire Engine House, Oakhill, Bath, BA3 5BJ

Information sheet Artificial bird nesting boxes for Buildings: Swifts, house martins and house sparrows

crossman ASSOCIATES

01761 233414
iinfo@crossmanassociates.co.uk
www.crossmanassociates.co.uk

Habibat house sparrow nest box

Vivara woodstone sparrow nest box; suitable for both integral fitment or surface mounting

Ibstock Swift boxes are also suitable for house sparrows. Can be customised to suit any exterior finish.Site boxes under eaves, away from windows and direct sunlight.

Ibstock Box

Sparrow boxes should be grouped together and be at least 2 m of the ground. The boxes can be also be sited on gable walls. At least 3 per averaged size house.

Swifts boxes should be at least 5 m above the ground with an clear un-obstructed flight path.

Schwegler model 9b

Schwegler house martin box model 9 b double is a suitable box for house martins and can be used to encourage the uptakeof a building by this species. The boxes can be attached to the exterior walls in a sheltered position; ideally beneath the eaves. At least two sets should be placed on an averaged size house.