

Bat Scoping Survey: Old Clack Farm, Ruislip

Client Jane Duncan Architects

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Written by Miguel Canovas

Crossman Associates

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

www.crossmanassociates.co.uk



Non-technical Summary

Background

In February 2025, Crossman Associates was commissioned to undertake a bat survey of Old Clack Farm, Harefield, Uxbridge UB9 6LU. Development proposals include internal restoration of the barn and roof refurbishment of the stables.

Methods

The scoping survey was undertaken by Miguel Canovas, an experienced ecologist and licenced bat worker. The building was inspected both externally and internally for any evidence of bat / bird presence, such as droppings, food remains, staining or actual bats / birds.

Results

The buildings are located within a semi-rural area. Overall, the buildings remain in good condition. However, the roof provides features suitable for roosting bats and include gaps on the roof and broken tiles.

The barn and the stables have moderate suitability for roosting bats.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the following be undertaken as part of the development:

- A further bat surveys of the buildings.
- Install a bird box on the buildings.
- Exterior lighting planned sensitive to nocturnal wildlife.

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1. Background

- 1.1. In February 2025, Crossman Associates was commissioned to undertake a bat survey of Old Clack Farm, Harefield, Uxbridge UB9 6LU. Development proposals include internal restoration of the barn and roof refurbishment of the stables. (ordnance Survey grid reference: TQ 07902 87702).
- 1.2. Figure 1 under Appendix II provides a site location map.
- 1.3. The objectives of the survey were to:
 - Assess the likely presence or absence of bats.
 - Identify any legislative or planning policy constraints relevant to the site.
 - Determine the need for further surveys, compensation, or mitigation.

Site Description

- 1.4. The site comprises a detached two-storey barn and a stable which is in a semi-rural area in Ruislip, London. The property has a maintained garden.
- 1.5. The property is adjoined on all sides by pasture and mature hedgerows.
- 1.6. The environs are predominately residential/rural with a mix of medium/large properties. The wider landscape includes farmlands and woodlands

Legislation

- 1.7. In the UK all species of bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended and the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations. Under this legislation it is a strict liability offence to injure or destroy a bat or to disturb damage or destroy the resting place of a bat. Under this legislation the UK is obliged to fully consider bats within the planning process and

the level of bat activity on-site must be fully assessed prior to the assessment the planning application.

- 1.8. In Britain all wild birds are granted legal protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) (as amended). This legislation protects the birds, their eggs and nests whilst being built or in use.

2. Methodology

Desktop Study

Data search

- 2.1. The MAGIC website was accessed to gain information on any statutory site designations within 4 km of the site that are designated for bats.

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. A bat scoping survey was carried out on the 27th February 2025 by Miguel Canovas, an experienced ecologist and licenced bat worker.
- 2.4. 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.
- 2.5. 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. Buildings 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.

Birds

- 2.6. The building was also inspected for the presence of birds including house sparrow *Passer domesticus*. The building was checked for field signs including nesting material, accumulations of droppings and/or pellets.

3. Results

Desktop Study

Data Search

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

Planning Policy

- 3.2. National policy guidance is provided by National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024), which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied to planning applications;

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- 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

- To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:
 - a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity⁶⁸; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
 - b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for 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 reasons⁷⁰ 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

Bat scoping survey

- 3.3. The external and internal conditions of the buildings are described in the table below and photographs can be found in Appendix II.

- 3.4. A table within Appendix III; information sheets set out the criteria for the way a building is assessed for its potential to support roosting bats.

Building	Feature	Feature Description	Bat suitability
The Old Clack Farm, Ruislip	Overview Barn	<p>Detached two-storey barn. The building is in usable condition and is currently used as storage.</p> <p>No droppings, staining, feeding remains or actual bats were observed in any aspect of the building.</p>	Moderate suitability ☒
	Exterior	<p>The brick and wooden clad walls are in good condition; no gaps or cracks were observed. The windows and doors are all well-sealed.</p> <p>The building is surrounded by lawns and introduced ornamental plants.</p>	
	Interior	<p>The interior is composed of sealed rooms with plaster and painted walls. There is no roof void.</p>	
	Roof	<p>Flat roof tiles, with gaps observed all around the building.</p>	

Building	Feature	Feature Description	Bat suitability
The Old Clack Farm, Ruislip	Overview Stable	Detached L-shaped stable. The building is in good condition and is currently used as storage. No droppings, staining, feeding remains or actual bats were observed in any aspect of the building.	Moderate suitability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Exterior	The brick walls are in good condition; no gaps or cracks were observed. There are gaps on the weather boards.	
	Interior	The interior is composed of sealed rooms with plaster and painted walls. The roof void is compost of exposed timber and type 1 bituminous sarking felt.	
	Roof	Flat roof tiles, with gaps observed all around the roof.	

Birds

- 3.5. No birds or bird nesting activity was recorded in any aspect of the buildings.

Evaluation

- 3.6. The property is located within a residential/semi-rural area and lies near to farmland and woodland with habitats likely to function as commuting and foraging resource for bats.
- 3.7. No droppings, staining, feeding remains or actual bats were observed in any aspect of the buildings. However, the roof provides features suitable for roosting bats and include gaps on the roof and broken tiles.
- 3.8. The buildings have moderate suitability for roosting bats.

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. The NPPF (2024) states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

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.

Further surveys of the buildings

- 4.5. To assess the likely presence or absence of bats, further surveys will be necessary.

- 4.6. At least two activity surveys will be undertaken. If bats are found, there may be a requirement to undertake a third survey to fully characterise the roost. Surveys are undertaken during the main bat activity period (May – August) and spread at least three weeks apart.
- 4.7. Surveys will involve appropriately experienced personnel observing all aspects of the building to watch where bats emerge (evening emergence surveys).
- 4.8. Evening emergence surveys commence approximately 20 minutes prior to sunset and continue for approximately two hours.
- 4.9. The results of the surveys (if bats are present) will inform an appropriate mitigation / compensation strategy that will ensure that bats are safe guarded during works and that bats are maintained at a favourable conservation status locally.

Lighting

- 4.10. The site lies near to farmlands and woodlands, 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.

Ecology enhancements

- 4.11. During the construction phase of the works, there is an opportunity to incorporate inexpensive ecological enhancements that aim to increase the biodiversity of the site.
- 4.12. Swifts (*Apus apus*) are a declining species in the UK, largely due to the loss of suitable nesting sites in modern and renovated buildings. To support local

biodiversity, fulfil policy objectives and contribute to swift conservation efforts, it is recommended that

- 4.13. At least one swift nest box to be installed on the buildings.
- 4.14. The nest box should be positioned at least 4 meters above ground level, under the eaves or on an appropriate sheltered wall, with a clear flight path and minimal disturbance. Ideally, the box should face north or east to avoid excessive heat exposure.
- 4.15. For a long-term, low-maintenance solution, we recommend incorporating the Action for Swifts S Brick into the development. The S Brick is a discreet, integrated nest box designed to be built directly into the structure of the building, providing a secure and permanent nesting site without affecting aesthetics or maintenance requirements. Models can be found on www.actionforswifts.com.

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

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



Appendix I – Site Figures



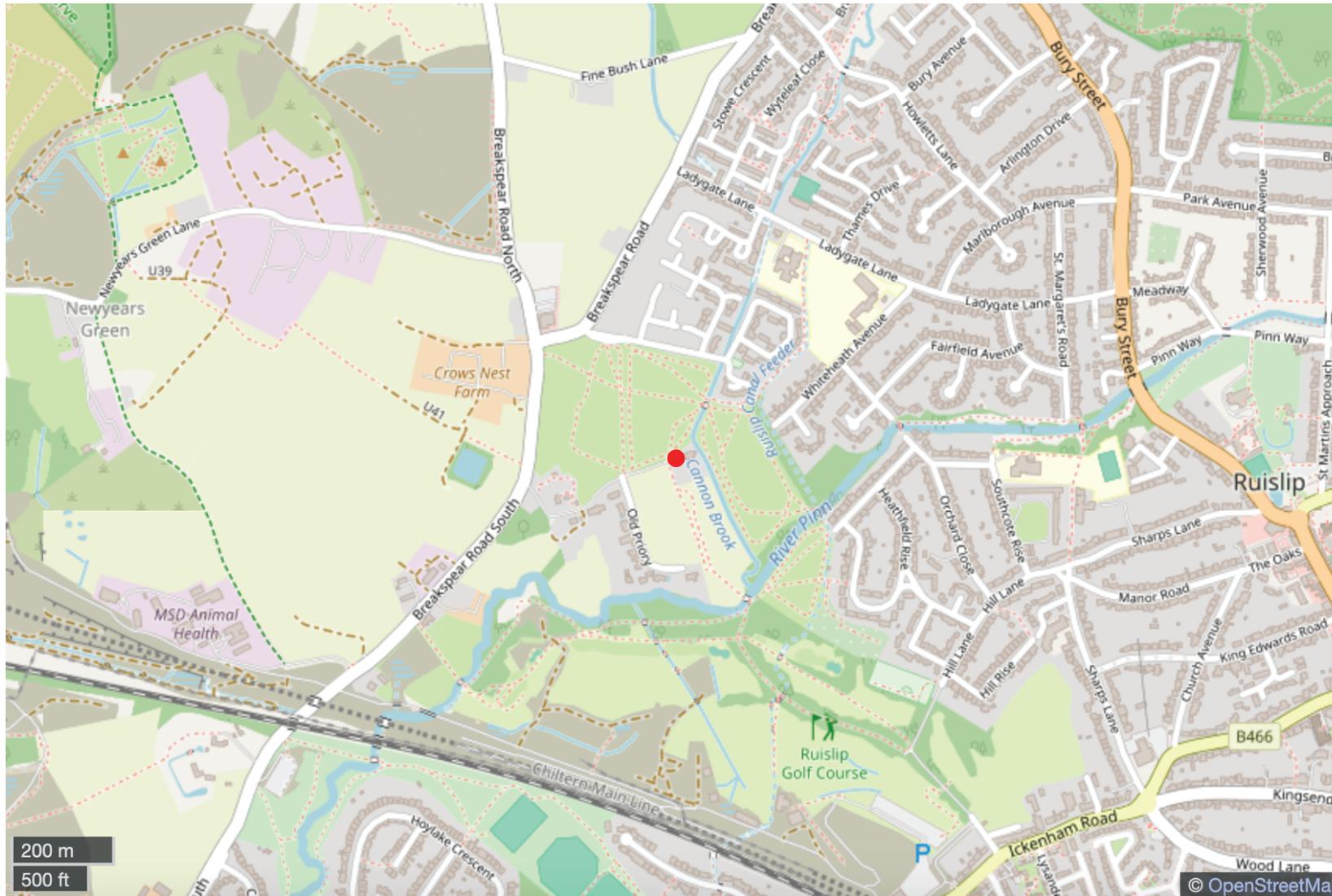
crossman
ASSOCIATES



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



Site location



Client Jane Duncan Architects

Title Location plan

Site Old Clack Farm, Ruislip

Figure 1

Date 10 March 2025

Scale Not to scale



Appendix II – Site Photographs



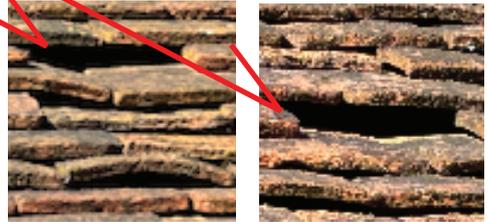
Photographs 1- 3



Photograph 1:

Barn - southwestern elevation

Roof tiles gaps detail



Photograph 2:

Northeastern elevation

Roof tiles gaps detail



Photograph 3:

Interior

Photographs 4 - 6



Photograph 4:

Stable - northeastern elevation

Roof tiles gaps detail



Photograph 5:

Western elevation

Roof tiles gaps detail



Photograph 6:

Roof void



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.

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



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.

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 house martin box model 9 b double is a suitable box for house martins and can be used to encourage the uptake of 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.

Ibstock Box



Schwegler model 9b